

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

An investigation into the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises

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Award date:
2013

Awarding institution:
Coventry University

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An Investigation into the Relationship between Organisational Communication, Trust and Organisational Commitment in Chinese Enterprises

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of Coventry
University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Coventry University, Faculty of Engineering and
Computing

Jun 2013

Declaration

I declare that this project is the result of my own work and all the written work and survey are my own, except where stated and referenced otherwise. This thesis has not been accepted or submitted for any comparable award elsewhere.

I have given consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Xue Zhou

Jun 2013

Abstract

Drawing on extant literature, a direct relationship between organisational communication and commitment factors has been demonstrated. This study was conducted to examine the trust climate involved in observed relations between organisational communication practices and organisational commitment. A cross-sectional descriptive questionnaire survey approach was adopted to gather data in three State-owned and two Joint-venture organisations located in the city of Nanjing, China. Using non-proportional stratified sampling, 1300 employee participants were chosen, and 757 responded with a usable response rate of 58%. Statistical software Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) were utilised to analyse the data. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analyses revealed that relations between employees' perspectives on organisational communication and their affective and normative commitment were mediated by trust in the workplace. The results showed that the 77% total effect of supervisory communication to commitment is mediated by the compound effort of trust in supervisor and trust in organisation. Additionally, trust in the organisation has been demonstrated as the mediator of trust in co-workers and organisational communication. The study recommends that Chinese organisations should; train managers to be good communicators, which could enhance employees' sense of belonging to the organisation and creating a trusting climate that increases the employees' commitment to the organisation. These could lead to more communication channels that would facilitate information sharing. Implications for researchers and managers are discussed and limitations are identified at the end of the research.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this research would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. I would like to take this opportunity to show my sincere appreciation to those people and organisations that helped me to finish this research.

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to my director of studies Dr Anthony Olomolaiye. His unwavering support and inspiration throughout the development and preparation of this thesis guided me to finish this study. I would also like to express my appreciation for his continuous encouragement as a strong support throughout my research journey. Appreciation also extends to my second supervisor Dr Steve Martin for his constructive opinions on my research project.

Secondly, many thanks go to the five Chinese enterprises who participated in this study. I would also like to thank the participants for their cooperation in completing my survey. In particular, I would like to thank the human resource managers who work in these five enterprises for their patience in helping me with data collection.

Thirdly, I would like to express my gratitude to the friendly staff in the Engineering Management Department of Coventry University. Their professional and critical advice contributed to my survey design.

Last but certainly not least, a special thanks to my family for putting up with me during these three years! I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents for their love and encouragement throughout my life. I would also like to thank them especially for their understanding of my commitment and their strong financial support, without them, I could not have made it this far.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATION

OC	Organisational communication
SC	Supervisory Communication
TIS	Trust in Supervisor
TIC	Trust in Co-worker
TIO	Trust in Organisation
AC	Affective Commitment
CC	Continuance commitment
NC	Normative Commitment
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
JVEs	Joint Venture Enterprises
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SEM	Structure Equation Modelling
PASW	Predictive Analytics software
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
POS	Perceived Organisation Support

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Preamble

China has made impressive progress during the past four decades since it adopted “positive reform and open door policy” in 1979. Reports show that in 2010 China overtook Japan to become the world’s second-biggest economy behind America (Dawson and Dean 2010).

Recently, Chinese enterprises have become major players in global markets. They have significantly increased their holdings of assets and gained increased market presence. However, the fact is that Chinese enterprises are less competitive than enterprises in other leading world economies due to poor management and technology (Porter et al. 2000). Tsui et al. (2004) point out that “given the rapid development of business in China, research lags substantially behind practice, a gap somewhat equivalent to where research in the United States was 50 years ago”. This is because in China, as a newly transformed market-driven economy, business management research is still in its infancy. Chinese scholars have started to carry out business research to address questions relevant to the Chinese context by adopting existing theories, constructs, and methods from the dominant management literature which tend to be based on studies in North America and particularly the USA (Tsui 2009). Although globalisation of commercial activities has fuelled the need for knowledge and understanding of management in Chinese economies, China is an important area which has not been studied sufficiently by management scholars (Wang 2005). Scholars have strongly recommended that more research should be conducted in the Chinese context to develop Chinese management theories, which may be able to contribute to global management knowledge and meaningfully address local management problems (Tsui 2009).

The concepts of organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment, and their applications to business organisations in Western contexts have been discussed for several decades (Meyer and Allen 1997).

Communication and co-operation between diverse participants within an organisation have been recognised as crucial elements to maintaining organisational stability and adaptation to change (Peng and Littlejohn 2001). Recently, researchers who are concerned about improving organisational effectiveness have also been focusing on organisational communication as a panacea for improved performance and competitive advantage (Daly, Teague and Kitchen 2003, Elving 2005, Kelly 2000, Peng and Littlejohn 2001). Communication is vital to a mutual understanding of the problems organisations have to face in order to meet global challenges (Bennebroek Gravenhorst, Werkman and Boonstra 1999). Although the general conclusion about the importance of communication in organisations is demonstrated and agreed upon, specific communicative actions, approaches and effects on Chinese enterprises are still left unexplained (Lewis 1999). In particular, the impact of communication practices on employees' attitudes and behaviour is not clear.

Trust and organisational commitment are two important work perspectives of employees' that have been given great attention by management scholars for two decades. The relationships between commitment and various positive individual-level and organisational-level outcomes have been researched, and numerous factors influencing commitment have been identified (Allen 1992, Mathieu and Zajac 1990, Vuuren, Jong and Seydel 2007). Employees' commitment to their organisations has been viewed as beneficial to organisations in the long term (Wong et al. 2001), while trust between individuals and groups within an organisation has also been shown as a highly important ingredient in the long term stability of the organisation and the well-being of its members (Cook and Wall 1980).

However, whilst these three elements (organisational communication, trust, and organisational commitment) have been deemed paramount in the performance of organisations, critical investigation of their interrelationship in Chinese enterprises has been superficial (Ramasamy, Goh and Yeung 2006). It has therefore been suggested that it is important to improve awareness of the significance and challenges of organisational communication issues on employees' attitude in Chinese enterprises. In addition, the development of an appropriate framework that can provide support for assessing the impact of communication practices on employees' psychological attachment to the

organisation will be useful for Chinese managers. In order to fill this gap, this research is going to examine the relationship between trust, communication and commitment in Chinese enterprises.

It is therefore the purpose of this introductory chapter to establish the general background to the thesis, justify the underlying principle for the research and highlight the research aims and objectives. This chapter also introduces the research approach, and at the end of this chapter, an outline of the structure for the thesis will be shown.

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

In the last two decades, organisational communication has been demonstrated as the driver of success in organisations (Byrne and LeMay 2006, Marques 2010). In particular, it has been shown that internal communication is critical to an organisation's effectiveness (Hargie, Tourish and Wilson 2002). Research has revealed direct links between high quality communications, improved productivity and reduced absenteeism (Clampitt and Downs 1993). Furthermore, satisfaction with organisational communication is positively related to actual job performance and reduced job stress (Chen, Silverthorne and Hung 2006).

In regard to those relationships of organisational communication, organisational commitment has been mentioned mostly because of the role it plays in job performance (Carmeli and Freund 2004, Meyer et al. 2002). Other factors that impact on organisational communication are: organisational citizenship behaviours (Ilies, Scott and Judge 2006), counterproductive work behaviour (Spector et al. 2006). Communication has been linked to organisational commitment in several ways. This research would suggest that organisational commitment is a consequence of internal communication. Varona (1996) found that internal communication is positively related to organisational commitment. The more satisfied employees are with communication, the more committed they are to the organisation and vice versa. Welch and Jackson (2007) mentioned that one of the key goals of internal communication is to improve the employees' positive sense of belonging to the organisation, so that the employees are subsequently willing to commit to their enterprise.

There are some scholars who feel that the research conducted in the practical area of organisational communication is so far insufficient (Marques 2010). A review of the research on organisational processes concluded that member satisfaction with organisational communication practices has been ignored (Chen, Silverthorne and Hung 2006:242). Chen et al. (2006) also observed that there is a lack of research on the relationship between organisational communication and commitment, and any relationship that may exist between these two variables is implied rather than demonstrated. This was supported by Vuuren et al (2007), who found that the relationship between supervisor communication and effective organisational commitment is mediated by the perceived person-organisation fit and organisational efficacy. In addition to the direct relationship, communication is also considered to provide the foundation for positive employee attitudes (Rodwell, Kienzle and Shadur 1998) and creates the condition for commitment (Postmes, Tanis and Wit 2001).

It is posited in this study that trust is a mediator between organisational communication and commitment. Trust within organisations and building positive trust climates in organisations have become substantial issues and the subject of much controversy and concern in recent years (Arnott 2007, Atkinson and Butcher 2003, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995, Morgan and Zeffane 2003, Rousseau et al. 1998). Trust is indispensable to good working relationships and an effective organisational environment (Fairholm 1994). High levels of trust are related to high job satisfaction (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004), organisational commitment (Albrecht and Travaglione 2003) and low intention to leave (Tan and Tan 2000). Trust within organisations enhances team-working, information sharing, and problem solving (Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001, Kath, Magley and Marmet 2010). Human resource management researchers who are concerned with improving organisational effectiveness have also been focusing on trust as a panacea to inspire employees' behaviours (Gbadamosi, Ndaba and Oni 2007, Tan and Lim 2009).

Trust has been shown to have a multitude of effects on organisational effectiveness (Chou et al. 2006). Perceived lack of trust and respect in the work environment has detrimental effects on both the organisation and employees. Employees who are distrustful feel less likely to contribute to organisational goals and activities to the same

degree as those who experience high levels of trust in their organisation (Long and Lau 2008, Tan and Lim 2009). When trust is weak, the atmosphere in the organisation engenders negative feelings and misperceptions (Li and Yan 2009).

It can even be said that organisations have trust climates almost like the weather. In the same way that the climate can be depressing and discouraging, or positive, stimulating and refreshing. A poor trust climate leads to lower employee productivity and overall dissatisfaction, and a positive trusting climate results in a more effective organisation (Lester and Brower 2003, Welch and Jackson 2007, Whitney 1994).

Trust and communication have been shown to enhance such organisational outcomes as employee participation and job performance (Dirks 1999, Dirks and Ferrin 2001, Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001). It has also been demonstrated that when employees' needs are met through satisfactory communication, employees are more likely to build effective working relationships (Gray and Laidlaw 2004).

Recent research has also shown that information transferred through effective organisational communication has a positive influence on trust construction; such as the quality and quantity of information which are positively associated with higher levels of trust (Becerra and Gupta 2003, Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001, Thomas and Zolin 2009). However, the quality and quantity of information cannot represent organisational communication in general. Organisational communication is a multidimensional construct primarily including communication channels, media quality, communication quality and frequency of communication and all of these dimensions may relate to the construction of trust. The relationship between organisational communication and trust within the organisation can assist in optimising how communication practices and trust within the organisation interact.

Organisational commitment has also been demonstrated as a consequence of trust in the organisation (Aryee, Budhwar and Chen 2002a, Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004, Tan and Lim 2009), trust in the supervisor (Gillespie 2003, Tyler 2003) and trust in co-workers (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004, McAllister 1995, Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis and Winograd 2000). Once a trust relationship has been established in the

workplace, the employees will exhibit their commitment to organisations.

There are three distinct types of organisational commitment that affect how the employees feel about the organisation they work for. These commitments are affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. However, due to the scope of this study, continuance commitment is not considered. The reason for this is shown on page 56 (paragraph 3).

As Blau (1964) noted, the establishment of exchange relations involves making investments that constitute commitment to the other party. Since social exchange requires trusting others to reciprocate, the initial obstacle is to prove oneself trustworthy. As mentioned earlier, organisational communication practice contributes to establishing trustworthiness of the trustees through proper information, words and communication. Once trust has been gained, organisational commitment can be established (Yamagishi, Cook and Watabe 1998); it can be assumed that organisational communication leads to trust, and such trust leads to commitment. In other words, trust is a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment.

Trust is also influenced by situational factors; different cultural and societal characteristics change the extent of trust and the impact it has on the development of a relationship (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994). The trust process, from trustee's trustworthiness to trustor's propensity to trust is also changeable within the effect of the situational constraints and domain-specific concerns (Dietz and Harton 2006). Huff and Kelley (2003) have demonstrated that compared with Asian countries, Western countries gained a higher extent of trust at both the individual and organisational level, this implies that the trust climate is not well built, nor has enough attention been paid to it in Asian countries. On the other hand, the relationship between trust, organisational communication and organisational commitment is also influenced by different cultures. As most of the researches on trust were undertaken in Western countries, the generalisability of these findings to other parts of the world is questionable (Wong, Ngo and Wong 2006). Moreover, most theories of organisational behaviour (e.g. communication and commitment) are mainly developed in Western countries. It is important and necessary to assess theory generalisability and model equivalence across

different cultural contexts. This research will be undertaken in Chinese enterprises in order to contribute to cultural studies of trust, organisational communication and commitment. This study is designed to overcome the paucity that exists in the examination of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese state-owned and Joint Venture enterprises. Subsequently, the mediator role of trust in the relationship between organisational communication and commitment is also of concern to this research, as relatively little research has been conducted on that area despite its significance.

There are various types of organisation in China including State-owned enterprises (SOEs), Joint Venture enterprises (JVEs), wholly foreign-owned enterprises and private enterprises. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) in China are typically large organisations; their operation and management are strongly influenced by governmental policies. Most of the SOEs in China are monopoly enterprises; the central planning system is operated by organisations. Since the adoption of the open-door economic policy in China, JVEs, which are formed by local enterprises and foreign partners combining together, have become major forms of foreign investment (Wong, Ngo and Wong 2003). Joint Ventures have adopted Western human resource practices in China (Goodall and Warner 1999). The way Joint Venture enterprises treat their employees is remarkably different from state-owned enterprises (Chow, Fung and Ngo 1999). Wong et al. (2006) demonstrated that, in SOEs, the perceived distributive justice of employees will have a stronger and more positive impact on their trust in the organisation than in JVEs in China. Therefore, it can be demonstrated that the relationship between trust, organisational communication and commitment in SOEs is quite different from such relationships in JVEs.

1.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of organisational communication variables (e.g. accuracy of information, communication relationship and communication channels) on organisational commitment from the psychological perspective, whilst exploring the mediating role of trust.

The research questions are:

1. Are there relationships between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment?
2. Does trust mediate the relationship between communication and organisational commitment?

Table 1-1 shows where other studies have created a gap in literature regarding the relationship between trust, organisational communication and commitment. It also demonstrates how this research is going to fill the gap. Figure 1-1 using a simple visual model, demonstrates the differences between previous studies and the current study in investigating the relationship between organisational communication, trust in the workplace and organisational commitment. In previous studies, the relationship between two of these elements has been examined, however, no single study has explored their relationship simultaneously, and even less has been mentioned about trust mediating the relationship between organisational communication and commitment.

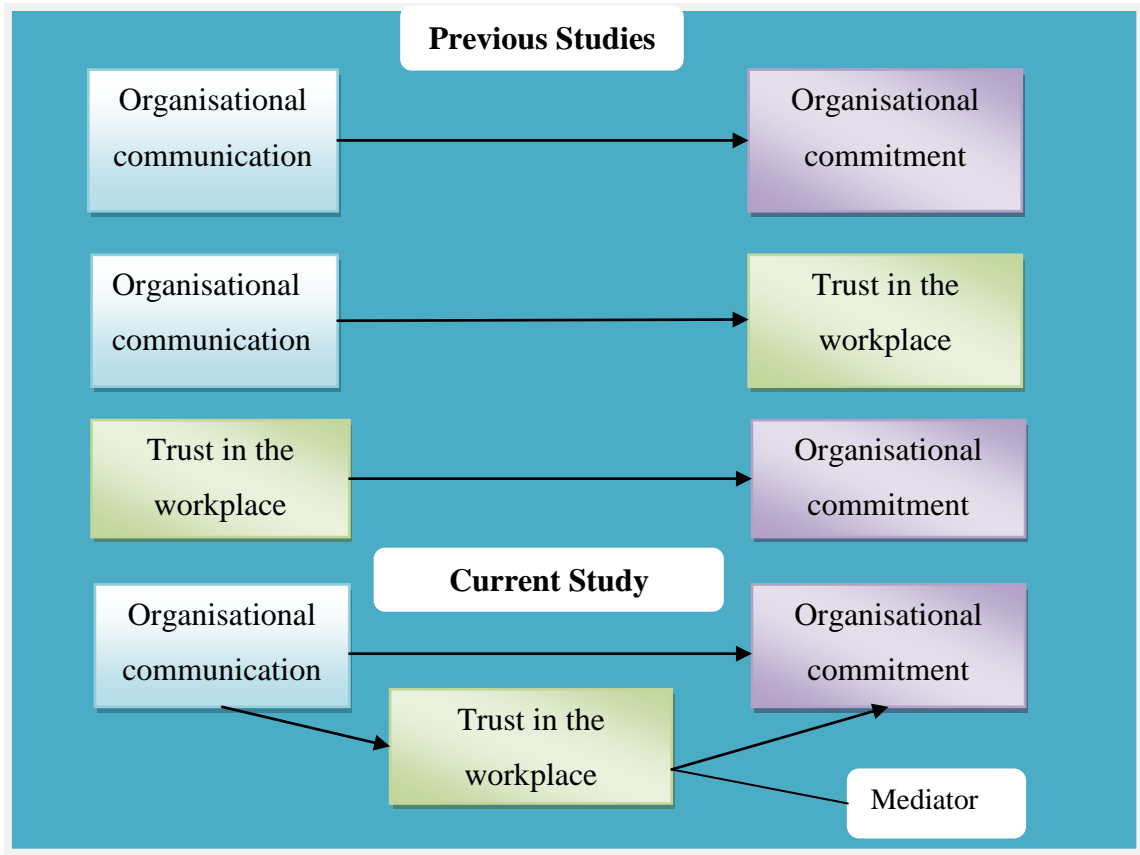


Figure 1-1 General models: A comparison between previous studies and this study

Table 1-1 Literature gap and how to fill

Components	Findings	Researchers	Year	Literature Gap	How does this research fill this gap
Organisational Communication and Trust	Organisational communication positively related to trust	Thomas, et al.	2009	Organisational communication and trust are multidimensional constructs. Investigation of the relationships between them should not be limited to one dimension.	This research is going to explore the relationship between the three dimensions of organisational communication and three dimensions of trust.
		Becerra and Gupta,	2003		
		Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak,	2001		
Organisational Communication and Commitment	Organisational communication positively related to commitment.	Varona	1996	Lack of research in the context of Chinese enterprises.	This research will examine the relationship between organisational communication and commitment in Chinese state-owned and Joint Venture enterprises.
Trust and commitment	Trust associated with commitment	Tan and Lim Shockley-Zalabak et al., McAllister,	2009 2000 1995	Focus on individual trust (trust in co-workers, trust in supervisors), did not investigate the individual trust and institutional trust (e.g. trust in the organisation) simultaneously.	This research will explore the relationship between trust and commitment by considering trust in co-workers, trust in supervisors and trust in the organisation simultaneously.
Trust, Organisational Communication and Commitment	Organisational communication building trust and commitment	Mishra	2007	The relationship between trust and commitment has been neglected.	This research will examine trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

In this section, the research aims, objectives and hypothesis are presented.

The aims of this research are:

1. To explore the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment.
2. To develop systematic models of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment.

Accordingly, the research objectives are:

- A. To understand the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication and organisational commitment.
- B. To critically evaluate the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.
- C. To appraise the relationship between organisational communication and trust in Chinese enterprises.
- D. To assess the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.
- E. To develop and test systematic models of the relationship between trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.

From the rationale for the research and the research aims and objectives above, a set of research hypothesis were formulated to guide the research. These are:

Table 1-2 Hypothesis of the research

Hypothesis one (H1)	Organisational communication is positively associated with individual trust.
Hypothesis two (H2)	Individual trust is positively associated with trust in the organisation.
Hypothesis three (H3)	Trust is positively associated with organisational commitment.
Hypothesis four (H4)	Organisational communication is positively associated with organisational commitment.
Hypothesis five (H5)	Individual trust mediates the relationship between organisational communication and trust in the organisation.
Hypothesis six (H6)	Trust in the organisation mediates the relationship between individual referent trust and organisational commitment.

Table 1.3 shows the relationship between the research aims, the research objectives and the initial propositions.

Table 1-3 Research aims/objectives and related research hypothesis

Aim	Focus	Objectives	Research Hypothesis
To explore the relationships between organisational communication, trust and commitment.	Current trust, organisational communication and commitment issues.	To identify the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication and organisational commitment.	1. Individual trust is positively related to trust in the organisation
		To explore the relationship between organisational communication and organisational trust in Chinese enterprises.	Organisational communication is positively associated with trust.
		To explore the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.	Trust is positively associated with organisational commitment
		To explore the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment.	Organisational communication is positively associated with organisational commitment.
To develop conceptual models of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment.	Relationship between trust, organisational communication and commitment.	To develop and test systematic models of the relationship between trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.	Trust mediates the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment

Conceptual Model of Hypothesized Interrelationships

As described, there are three constructs in this study:

- a) Organisational communication,
- b) Trust,
- c) Commitment.

A hypothesis model in Figure 1-2 shows trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment in Chinese enterprises:

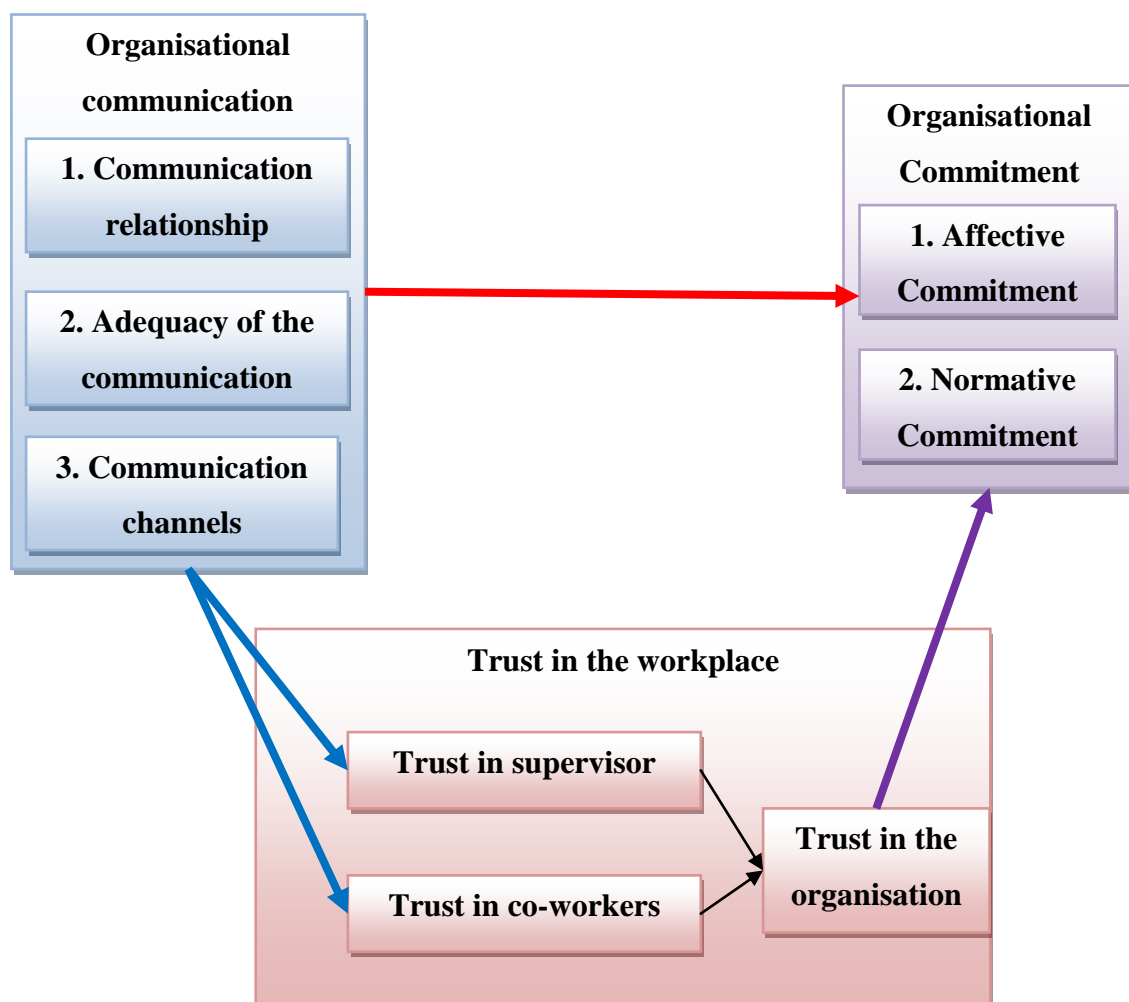


Figure 1-2 A Conceptual Model of the Hypothesized Interrelationship between organisational communication, organisational commitment and trust in the workplace

1.4 Research Programme

In accordance with the aims of this research, the research programme was divided into six broad steps as shown in Figure 1-3.

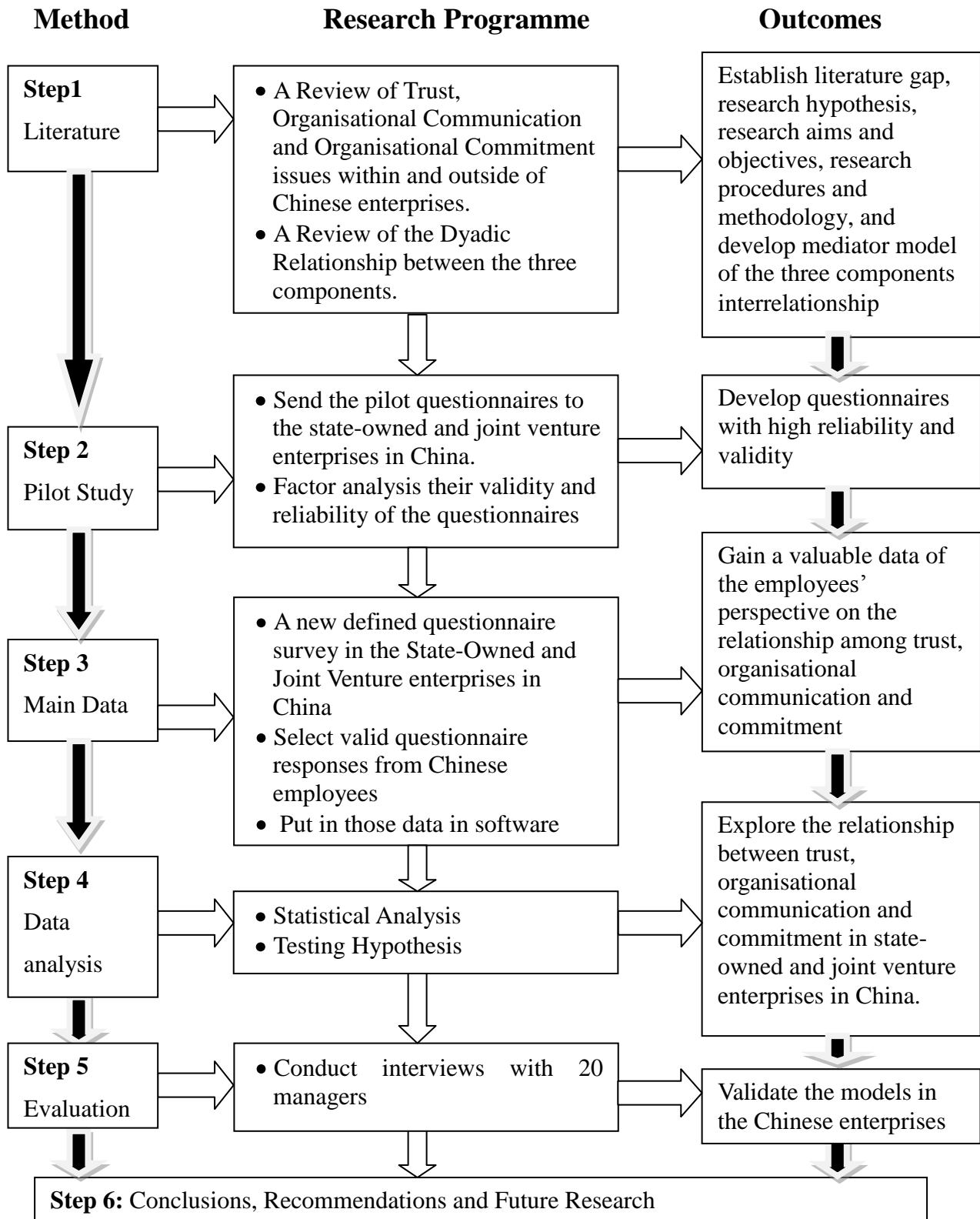


Figure 1-3 Research Programme

1.5 The Significance of this Research

This study has both theoretical and practical significance to employee management in Chinese organisations. From the psychological perspective, it adds to the human resource management literature on how trust impacts on organisational communication practice and contributes to the commitment of employees.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

Firstly, there is a paucity of empirical research on the relationship between communication, trust and organisational commitment. The distinctive factors of organisational trust and its interplay in organisational communication and commitment have not been considered. The proposed model shows that trust can mediate the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment, and will contribute to the literature on trust, communication and commitment.

Secondly, there is much evidence in the research literature that has demonstrated the antecedents and consequences of organisational trust, but little has been mentioned how trust can be built (Ferres 2002). This study demonstrates, from the psychological perspective, how trust influences communication practice based on the three dimensions of organisational communication.

Thirdly, this is a cross-cultural empirical study testing the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment. The theory of organisational behaviour relating to trust and organisational communication has been developed in Western countries. Therefore, this research will test the generalisability of this theory to the Asian context.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Firstly, according to the demographics in Chinese organisations, it may indeed be advantageous for senior management to evaluate which communication formats are best understood and accepted by employees, which in turn enables the creation of a trust climate within the organisation.

Secondly, the positive aspects of trust have implications for organisational leaders and human resource professionals – particularly in organisations with large numbers of employees, matrix structures and multi-hierarchy structures. Managers should show concern for every employee in the organisation. Meanwhile, sufficient and effective communication should be carried out at different levels in order to create a trusting environment within the organisation where conflict can be reduced and employees' commitment enhanced (Daft 2002).

Thirdly, this research will reveal a clear benefit of the existence of trust in different foci: trust in the organisation, trust in supervisors and trust in co-workers. At the same time, according to the different demographic factors, the research will examine the effect of trust on the relationship between communication and commitment. According to this research, administrators can manage employees with a range of methods.

Finally, this study suggests that the development of trust should be incorporated into new ways of considering management. The development and maintenance of trust is challenging, especially where existing levels of trust are low. However, trust can be managed and built, which will result in worthwhile outcomes.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

To increase the credibility of this study, it is important that the sample chosen for the research is representative of the population that the researcher will investigate. The samples of the study are employees of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Joint Venture enterprises (JVEs) in China.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Firstly, all the data collected by self-report, and personal bias may influence the outcomes of the research (Van Dijk 2004).

Secondly, this study is a research survey, so it is limited by the willingness of the participants to respond and provide accurate responses. Therefore, the extent to which the participants have sufficient knowledge to answer all the survey items, or the distortion of their responses due to personal bias, are areas for potential error in measurements.

Thirdly, this study is conducted in Chinese petrochemical enterprises. The unique characters of petrochemical industry may impact on the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of five chapters as shown in figure 1-4.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter outlines issues arising from research, and the reasons for the author to conduct the research. The significance of both theoretical and practical perspectives, and the aims and objectives of the research are presented. It also introduces the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of trust, internal communication and commitment within organisations. It highlights the importance of the three components for organisational effectiveness and their interrelationship. Research from previous studies has been used to establish a mediator model which will be presented at the end of chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data Collection

This chapter compares the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research methods and explains how the most suitable research method was selected for this research. It also lists all the variables which will be measured. A pilot study was conducted before the main data collection phase. Following the pilot, the questionnaire was reviewed, revised and edited to develop a new questionnaire with high reliability and validity which was used to collect data in the sample Chinese enterprises. PASW and AMOS software were also used to analyse the data.

Chapter 4: Results

Relevant diagrams illustrate the relationship between the components, and each hypothesis will be tested in turn. Several statistical methods are used in this chapter including structural equation modelling, Pearson correlation, analyses of variance and t-test.

Chapter 5: Evaluation

In this chapter, data from the 20 semi-structured interviews are summarised and synthesised to evaluate the theoretical models for demonstrating the interrelationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment both vertically and horizontally in Chinese enterprises. Two systematic productivity models are developed that could be adopted and implemented by Chinese managers intending to improve employees' attitudes and behaviour, which in turn increases organisational performance. Content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to examine the data collected.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire survey on the effect of communication relationship, adequacy of information and communication channels in the successful exploitation of organisational communication issues for improved management of employees' attitude in Chinese enterprises.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the limitations and possible future directions of the research, which could benefit future scholars. Based on the results of the work, a range of suggestions and recommendations are propounded for Chinese managers to improve their performance and develop a healthy trust climate in their organisation.

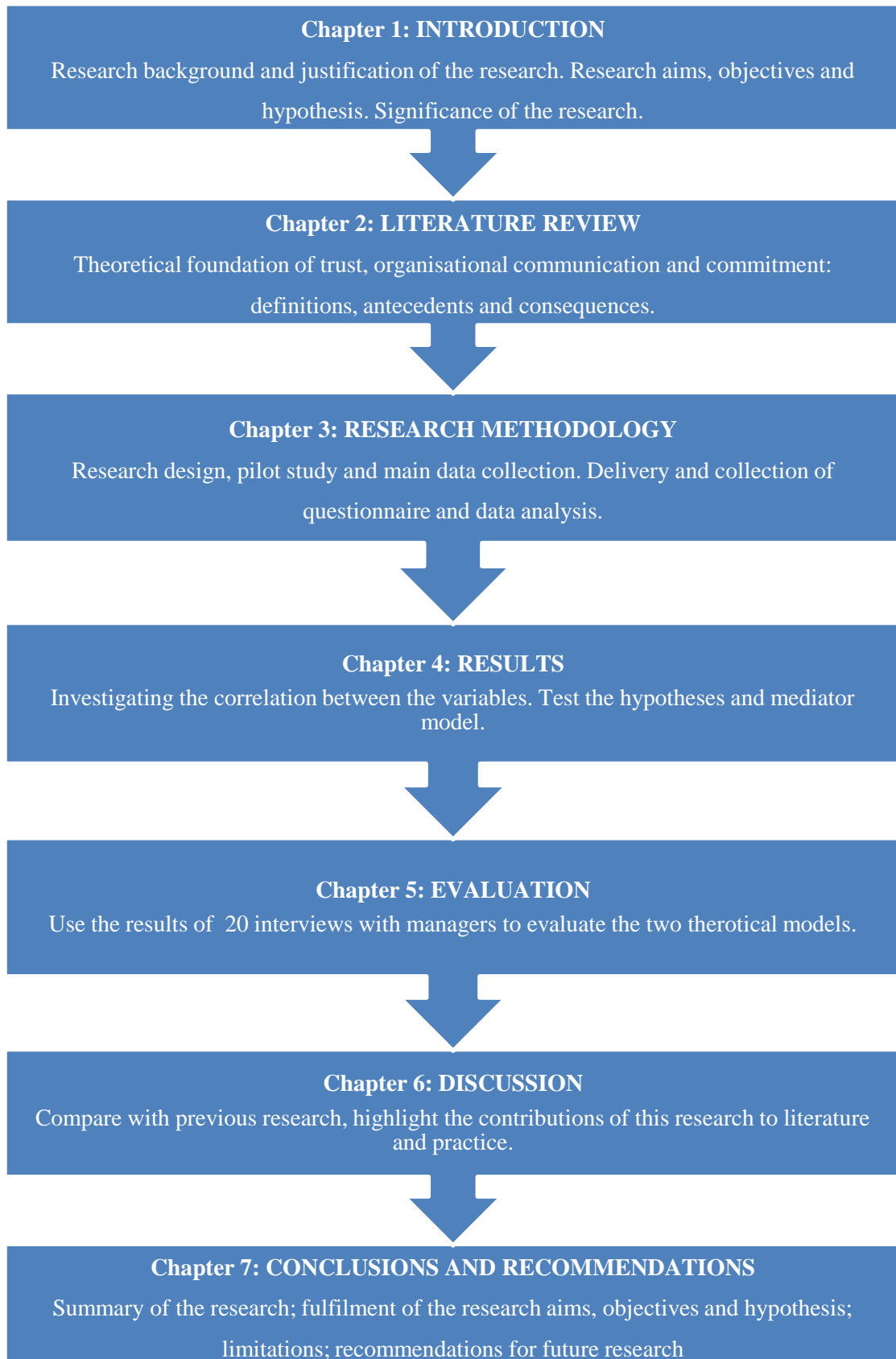


Figure 1-4 Structure of the thesis

1.9 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research and justified the rationale for the study. An extensive review of the literature and initial preliminary research suggests there is a need to conduct further research into the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. The research aims, objectives and six main hypotheses were also introduced.

This chapter has presented the research methodology and data analysis techniques which will be used. Two statistical software programmes including Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) will be employed to analyse the quantitative data captured from established and validated questionnaires.

The significance of both theoretical and practical aspects of this research has been discussed. This research will seek to corroborate the organisational behaviour theory by examining the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. Finally, the thesis structure has been outlined and a brief introduction to the seven chapters presented.

In the next chapter, previous work related to organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment will be examined. The second chapter will also demonstrate the hypotheses and conceptual models.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Preamble

This chapter aims to explain the terms of trust, organisational communication and commitment, which are key to identifying the relationship between employer and employees in organisations.

The literature reviewed in this study is taken from a variety of human resource management disciplines including organisational communication, trust and commitment. Firstly, the literature addresses the development of Chinese enterprises and their categories. Different types of enterprise have different organisational cultures, which evidently influence the roles of trust, organisational communication, commitment and their interrelationships within the company.

Secondly, this chapter will review literature about organisational communication, and examine the meaning of organisational communication from both a management and a communication studies perspective, and consider the efforts and challenges which this concept presents. In addition, the literature will be examined in terms of the impact which the dimensions of an organisational communication has on the effective management and organisational outcomes.

Thirdly, the concept of trust will be dealt with in terms of its meaning in existing research studies, and the antecedent conditions which have been found to harbour trust in the workplace, and the consequences of the proliferation of trust will also be examined. Trust will also be reviewed in terms of referents of trust including trust in supervisors, trust in co-workers and trust in the organisation, which have different roles in managing organisational effectiveness. Previous studies which have explored this relationship between organisational communication and trust will also be examined and assessed.

Fourthly, organisational commitment will be reviewed in literature, considering its meaning, the antecedent conditions which are required for commitment by employees, and the impact which the proliferation of organisational commitment has on the organisation. The

interrelationship between commitment and organisational communication, commitment and trust will be examined in literature.

This study proposes that trust is a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment, which has been based on the social exchange theory. The position and relevance of this research project in terms of existing and current literature will be explained, and is presented in figure 1-2.

2.1 Chinese Enterprises

China has a current population of 1.35 billion and its history stretches over 5000 years (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2013). During this long history, the Chinese cultivated a strong collectivist culture, contrary to the individualist culture of Western countries (Hofstede 1980). According to Hofstede's (1980), western individualist countries harbour a culture whereby individuals are socially expected to look after their own interests and the interests of their immediate families. Whereas in collectivist cultures such as in south-east Asia, people look after the interests of the larger community and tend to owe loyalty to wider social groups. Chinese people emphasize loyalty to the leader and the rest of this wider group to ensure the survival and effectiveness of the collective (Brislin 1993).

Before the economic reform of 1979, most Chinese organisations were government-owned, or collective-owned, meaning all property, resources and profits were controlled by the government. China's economy was previously a centrally planned system where most economic entities belonged to the whole state, and the government executed daily management. The ownership composition of business organisations was totally dominated by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) prior to 1979 which marks the opening up of China to the rest of the world, following a new era of reform. People were assigned to the position in SOEs, where the jobs were secure. Employees were not afraid of losing their jobs nor did they have any choice in changing their jobs (Cheng and Stockdale 2003). Turnovers was nonexistent in the planned economic system (Prybyla 1978), meaning that employees in China would stay in the same organisation for their whole working live.

After the economic reform of 1979, Chinese government implemented the "open door policy" which promoted foreign trade and economic investment, the centralised economic centralised

planning system was replaced by a decentralized system (Ma 1997) and more foreign investment were allowed to enter the Chinese market. New types of enterprises with different ownership, other than state-owned enterprises, appeared in the Chinese market. Joint venture enterprises (JVEs), which are formed by a local enterprise and a foreign partner, with the purpose of introducing new technology and developing new products and markets, were set up in China. In 2008, according to the official data, the amount of utilized foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Chinese market was approximately 92.4 billion dollars (Qin 2009). According to the official site for registration of foreign invested enterprises in China, by the end of 2010, over 400,000 foreign enterprises had invested in coastal areas and large cities (Emage Company 2010). With such a tremendous increase in the number of joint venture enterprises and companies owned entirely by foreign investors in China, employees were given more opportunity to choose satisfied satisfactory wage and jobs with welfare advantages.

In addition, since China joined the world trade organisation (WTO) in 2001, SOEs have had to face more competition, especially from foreigner organisations. Before 1979, Chinese employees believed that once they were employed by a state-owned company, their whole life would be insured. State-owned enterprises were able to offer a good package of benefits, and the future of the company was secure as a result of government support. The Chinese government decided to try to increase competition between state-owned companies to encourage the workforce, by reducing the certainty of their employment.

At the eve of the 15th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in 1997, the Chinese government proposed a “state-owned enterprises reform” policy in which permanent contracts were replaced by a short-term fixed contract in an attempt to optimise the personnel management and as a result, state-owned enterprises were able to maintain an advantageous position in the market. Employees of state-owned enterprises then realised that their employer could no longer guarantee a steady future, and so the rate of change of employees within the organisation increased. Employees began to take preference for working in JVEs, rather than SOEs because they offered a higher salary and more training opportunities. However, the condition of employment in JVEs, which adopt Western human resource practices (Goodall and Warner 1999), is remarkably different from those in SOEs (Chow, Fung and Ngo 1999). People who work in JVEs have to face fierce competition and work under strict regulations. Consequently, employees tend to feel under increasing pressure from

heavy workloads, and often find it difficult to build a strong commitment to their employer organisation. Towers-Perrin (2006) conducted a study to investigate employee engagement in 16 countries, the results of which are displayed in Figure 2-1 and show that Chinese employees have particularly poor levels of engagement with their organisation. No more than 8% of Chinese workers are highly engaged, while the average rate over the 16 studied countries was found to be 14%, and in the US 21% of employees were found to be highly engaged with their employer organisation.

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***Global weighted average, based on total survey**

Figure 2-1 Employee engagement around the globe (Adopted from Towers-Perrin 2006)

2.2 Organisational Communication

Research has found that developing effective and efficient internal organisational communication systems, including providing relevant and timely information for all levels of employees in the organisation, has a significant influence on human resource management (Carriere and Bourque 2009). Organisations are becoming increasingly complex, and the dynamic and diverse working environment which this produces, requires advanced technologies for internal communication (Byrne and LeMay 2006, Turner et al. 2006). At the same time, employees have begun to demand more information, fed through a positive communication relationship with their organisation, which plays an important role in enhancing their behaviour and attitudes towards work (Thomas and Zolin 2009).

Due to the influence of the attitudes and behaviours of employees on the outcomes of workers, good organisational communication is considered to be a positive way to improve working effectiveness at both the individual and organisational level (Hargie, Tourish and Wilson 2002, Hargie and Tourish 2009, Nobile and McCormick 2008, Snyder and Morris 1984). Thus, it is necessary to consider the relationship between organisational communication and employees' attitudes such as trust and commitment, for informing the possibility of improving employee performance and contributions to the organisation.

2.2.1 The Definition of Organisational Communication

Traditionally, communication tended to be viewed as a relatively simple linear process, in which a message was transmitted by a sender to a source, who then understood, internalized and acted on the message (Goldhaber et al. 1978). Shannon and Weaver (1949) developed a communication linear model which is displayed in Figure 2-2, presenting the transmission of the information from source to receiver.

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Figure 2-2 Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (1949)

There are various concepts involved in Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model of communication.

Source - Receiver

Individuals send messages as sources and receive messages as receivers. The process is often so rapid as to appear to be simultaneous.

Encoding

Encoding involves choosing the appropriate 'code' or language to use. This will need to be appropriate for receivers and their skills, language and abilities and also appropriate to the channel and medium used. Examples of inappropriate 'coding' might include the use of technical jargon, which could confuse the receiver, or the use of very formal language at an informal social event.

Decoding

This means interpreting the information sent, and can mean translating to another language or understanding what a nod or a wink means. It is the reverse process to encoding.

Channel

This is the medium by which the message is carried and transferred. The traditional channel includes face-to-face communication, letters, memos, and so on. With the advancement of technology, modern technological channels have been developed such as email, e-conference, and social networks such as facebook.

Noise

This refers to any form of interference with the message, which has the result of reducing the quality or strength of the message 'signal' or generating spurious, distracting or inaccurate information. This can be external (traffic noise, bad telephone line, a bad fax copy, a misspelled or incorrectly used word) or internal (preoccupation with other messages, a headache, or strong negative feelings about the transmitter).

The advantage of Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model is the way it describes how the information is transferred in a simple and easily understood format. This model is a general model that can be applied in all types of communication. However, the model oversimplifies the process of communication and a number of important considerations have not been included. Nor is there any mention in the transmission model of the importance situational, social, institutional, political, cultural, and historical context. The meaning of the message can not be interpreted correctly without an understanding of such contexts. The context of the organisation has a key influence on what are perceived as the appropriate form, style, and content of communication events.

Organisational communication is a process by which information about organisational policies, procedures, finance and customer feedback are conveyed to others in the organisation (Vandenberg, Richard and Eastman 1999). According to Hargie and Tourish (2009), through positive organisational communication, productivity, performance and profitability can be improved.

Recently, scholars have recognised that organisational communication is about the organisational actors, and their role in influencing each other in the context of asymmetrical power relationships, during which they compete for power, resources, voice and legitimacy (Tourish 2007). Thus, organisational communication is defined as a tool for creating, defining, and shaping relationships. Hunt et al. (2000) pointed out that organisational communication is not just for getting a message across, it is also central to the development and maintenance of positive working relationships, harmony and trust.

Traditional definitions, such as Shannon and Weaver's (1949) linear model of communication, focus on organisational communication as an informational vehicle that

takes a message from one person to another within an organisation. However, such definitions neglect to consider the role of organisational communication in building mature relationships in the workplace. Tourish's (2007) definition fulfils this gap by emphasising that positive and harmonious relationships could be developed through organisational communication, but it undervalues the basic function of organisational communication for sending information related to the organisation's policy, operation, and market plan to actors in the organisation. Thus, a variety of definitions of organisational communication are considered in this study to enable a broad understanding of this complex concept. The definition of organisational communication should consider two functions in terms of information transfer, and relationship building. It is a two way process of making, sending and moving copied and distributable resources, during which relationships between different organisational actors such as employees and employers are developed.

2.2.2 The Effect of Organisational Communication

Communication has been the focus of significant amounts of research over the past 20 years. Studies have found that extensive benefits can be produced from good organisational communication (Clampitt and Downs 1993, Downs and Adrian 2004, Elving 2005, Tubbs and Widgery 1978). Positive communication enables the organisation to achieve its purpose by improving productivity, objective measures, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. The impact of communication can be addressed at two levels; the organisational level, and the individual level.

Organisational level:

Organisational variables such as productivity and objective measures were found to connect to organisational communication (Clampitt and Downs 1983). The link between organisational communication and productivity is sometimes hard to measure because productivity is affected by so many complex variables. However there is evidence which shows that organisational communication is sometimes directly associated with productivity in a less obvious way (Downs and Adrian 2004). Clampitt and Downs (1993) conducted research with the aim of determining employee perceptions of the impact of organisational communication on productivity. The research was undertaken in a service organisation and a manufacturing sector organisation. The results found eight dimensions of organisational

communication that impact on employee productivity levels. Additionally, Tubbs and Widgery (1978) measured the impact of a new communication program at General Motors and noted a 0.7% productivity increase and savings of \$7 million in production cost. Moreover, a report by Dawson-Sheperd and White (1994) showed that of the companies who had fair and positive employee communication policies, 65.1% credited the policies with improving productivity, 68.1% credited the policies with reducing the number of industrial disputes, and 80.3% credited them with improvements in employee loyalty.

Snyder and Morris (1984) support this with their findings that the perceived quality of communication (i.e., effectiveness and adequacy of communication) from supervisors is strongly and positively related to objective measures (i.e., cost of operation per employee, number of clients served) of overall organisational performance. More and more scholars have realised that the important role of organisational communication is specific to the scenario such as changing environment. Elving (2005) proposed a conceptual model of how communication can facilitate a process of change and prevent resistance to change. As further confirmation, Qian and Daniels (2008) conducted research to test a model of employee cynicism toward organisational change from the communication perspective in a higher education institution and concluded that quality of information is negatively related to intention to resist change. This emphasises the importance of organisational communication during periods of change, and suggests that administrators should provide timely information about any changes to the organisation to employees, and therefore avoid news spreading through the grapevine.

On the contrary, negative organisational communication could bring higher levels of absenteeism, increase turnover rate and cause industrial unrest (Hargie, Tourish and Wilson 2002). It is believed that insufficient attention given to constructing positive communication programmes systematically undermines organisational performance (Hargie and Tourish 2009). Poor information exchange exacerbates uncertainty, increases alienation and produces a segmented attitude to work that is inimical to the spirit of innovation.

Individual Level:

Further evidence has shown that organisational communication has significantly contributed to the positive development of employees' behaviour and attitude in the organisation.

Muchinsky (1977) examined the relationship between organisational communication, organisational climate and job satisfaction in a large public utility company. The results showed that the more satisfied the employees are with the standard of communication; the higher job satisfaction the employees have in terms of work, supervision, pay, promotion and co-worker relationships. In the same vein, Nobile and McCormick (2008) examined the relationship between organisational communication and job satisfaction in Australian Catholic schools and found that supportive, democratic, cultural and open communication are related to job satisfaction.

In terms of individual behaviour, job performance was also found to be associated with organisational communication (Pincus 1986). Later, Chen et al. (2006) compared the relationship of organisational communication, job stress, organisational commitment and job performance of accounting professionals between Taiwan and America. Organisational communication was found to be the predictor of organisational commitment and performance in both countries.

Researchers and professionals have supported the concept that the communication process by which information about policies, procedures, finance and customer feedback is conveyed to others in the organisation has consequences on the employees' commitment towards the organisation (Mishra 2007, Putti, Aryee and Phua 1990, Varona 1996).

2.2.3 The Dimensions of Organisational Communication

Organisational communication has been deemed to be a multidimensional construct, supported by several research findings (Carriere and Bourque 2009, Eppler and Lurati 2006). Downs and Hazen (1977) identified 8 dimensions of communication; organisational climate, supervisor communication, organisational integration, media quality, horizontal communication, organisational perspective, subordinates communication and personal feedback. In 1990, Downs increased this to 10, adding top management communication and interdepartmental communication. All of these dimensions can provide a barometer for organisational function, and the concept of communication can be a useful tool in an audit of organisational communication (Downs and Hazen 1977).

Gray and Laidlaw (2004) divided these dimensions into two categories; informational level and relational level (see Table 2-1). Communication at the informational level is considered as related to the task-role or organisational activities, while the relational level considers the relationships between supervisors and subordinates, horizontal and informal communication, personal feedback forms and media quality. However, dimension “subordinate communication” was omitted from the analysis because the particular item was relevant only to respondents in supervisory positions. Such clarification of dimensions of organisational communication is consistent with the statements by Putti, Aryee and Phua (1990), who delineate two aspects of communication relationship satisfaction: (a) The extent to which the available information fulfils the task or for simply being informed about organisational activities (Informational Communication) and (b) the personal satisfaction inherent in successfully communicating to someone or successfully being communicated with (Relational Communication).

Table 2-1 Dimensions of organisational communication (Adopted from Gray and Laidlaw 2004)

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However, the classifications mentioned above had mixed referents (e.g. immediate supervisor, co-worker) with observed dimensions of organisational communication. Although researchers tend to agree with a multidimensional view of communication, they also suggest that not all facets are necessary to assess every environment (Byrne and LeMay 2006). For instance, in a flat structure organisation where the supervisor might be responsible for more than 200 employees, the relationship between supervisor and subordinates is not as important as horizontal relationship, because most communication is conducted between colleagues. Thus, it is necessary to leave the matter of referents aside and choose the focal areas of

organisational communication separately. The priority that needs to be identified is employees' evaluation standards of satisfactory organisational communication.

Members of the International Communication Association (ICA) worked together from 1971 to 1979 to develop and refine a method to diagnose communication in organisations. Three main dimensions of organisational communication were assessed in the survey as the ICA indicated that these dimensions compose successful communication practices in the organisation. The three dimensions are: adequacy of information exchange, communication channels and communication relationship (Downs and Adrian 2004:124).

Communication auditors believed that adequacy of information exchange is one of the most significant element which should be assessed (Down and Adrian 2004). Byrne and LeMay (2006:149) defined the perception of quality of communication as "whether the information is relevant, accurate, reliable and timely". The information covering areas of organisational policy, operation guidelines, and organisational development and feedback of individual performance, is important to the operation of the organisation. Employees need to have appropriate information to be able to do their jobs. However, in many organisations such information is late in coming or missing entirely.

Communication channels can be an important variable in facilitating information exchange. Today, people have more communication channels to choose from than ever before. Telecommunication technology, digital compression algorithms and visual media are becoming more prevalent. In many circles, there continues to be a bias in favour of face-to-face communication. Hargie and Tourish (2000) found that some executives believed that they could exert their influence primarily in face-to-face interactions and that email is not an appropriate tool for communication. The impact of communication channels has received considerable research attention. Scholars have started to explore how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of information transfer through the adoption of appropriate communication channels.

The communication relationship is another important element for determining the quality of communication. Barriers and obstacles can be reduced when communicators feel more comfortable and relaxed with the relationship, and subsequently the information can be transferred easily. This phenomenon is more prevalent in Chinese enterprises where

information and knowledge are managed more informally and personally than western countries (Burrows, Drummond and Martinsons 2005). Relationship in Chinese is called “*guanxi*”, which has raised the attention of many management scholars as its important role in knowledge sharing (Huang, Davison and Gu 2011, Ramasamy, Goh and Yeung 2006). The Chinese are quite unique in their attitudes, as they are only willing to disclose information and cooperate based on *guanxi* (relationship) (Ramasamy, Goh and Yeung 2006). Huang et al. (2011) points out that a harmonious working environment, where *guanxi* may be developed and strengthened, is a critical facilitator for effective knowledge sharing in Chinese organisations.

Different communication formats have been adapted to help achieve high quality organisational communication, within the organisation, as employee perspectives are influenced by various kinds of communication practice.

With regard to criteria and formats, this research will adopt the three dimensions of organisational communication proposed by ICA integrated with two directions of communication; vertical and horizontal (see Table 2-2), which will be explained further in the following section.

Table 2-2 Dimensions of organisational communication

Dimensions Directions	Adequacy of information			Communication Relationship	Communication Channel
	Type	Load	Timeliness		
Vertical					
Horizontal					

1. Adequate information

One aim of communication is to transfer information, the quality of which will affect employee understanding of what is happening in the organisation and relevant issues around their work. Downs and Adrian (2004) assert that there are three issues related to how adequately this is accomplished: type, timing and load of information.

- **Type:** this refers to the information employees need to perform their jobs. It is important for employee performance, because all kinds of information may be related to individual task processes or personal employee benefits. Employees may feel unsafe and uncertain whether they receive all relevant information.
- **Load:** this refers to the frequency and amount of communication that takes place. Giving employees too much or too little information both have a negative impact on the operation of the organisation. In such circumstances, more communication is certainly not better communication (Downs and Adrian 2004). Hargie, Tourish, and Wilson (2002) demonstrated that when management focuses on increasing information and reducing uncertainty, communication satisfaction among employees is improved.
- **Timeliness:** this refers to the extent to which the receivers have information within an acceptable timeframe. Information has a unique timeliness, thus, receivers must have their message whilst it is still meaningful (Zaremba 2006). Many employees feel as if they are being cheated or betrayed if they initially get their organisational information through a public newspaper (Downs and Adrian 2004). Thus, it is important to consider timeliness of information as an important driver of organisational communication.

2. Communication channels

Messages have to be transmitted through some sort of channel or media. With recent rapid advancements in technology, there are now multiple possible communication channels. Channels used in the organisation include face-to-face communication, e-mail, telephone, fax, voicemail, computer conferences, memos and notice boards. Information can be interpreted differently depending on the medium through which it is delivered. Daft and Lengel's (1984) media richness theory proposed that communication media can be categorized based on its capacity to convey non-verbal cues, both visual (e.g., body language, hand gestures and facial expressions) and auditory (e.g. pitch, tone, volume and speed). Media which offers more interactivity and communication cues belong to a rich continuum such as face-to-face communication; while media which lose their interactivity and communication cues are

deemed as lean continuum such as email (Daft and Lengel 1986). The method of communication chosen can play an important role in how a message will be received (Zaremba 2006), and it will influence the clarity of the information, which is one of the criteria for establishing the quality of communication.

3. Communication Relationships

All message exchanges take place between people within a specific relationship context. The relationship between communicators will determine the content and quality of the communication. Furthermore, the status of a relationship can affect the response to any messages (Downs and Adrian 2004). This study considers the supervisor-subordinate relationship and team relationships between co-workers.

1) Supervisor-subordinate relationship (vertical):

For most employees, regular communication takes place with their supervisor. The relationship between supervisors and subordinates is a crucial focal point for a communication audit (Downs and Adrian 2004). When employees do not perceive supervisors as being patient, or believe them to not be giving enough attention to communication, employees will be reluctant to continue the conversation. Conversely, body language can convey emotions such as respect between the supervisor and employee, allowing employees to involve themselves in the communication and without concern for expressing their opinions. Research shows that a satisfactory relationship between supervisor and subordinates brings high employee commitment and reduces the likelihood of them wanting to leave their job long after starting. In the Chinese context, the supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* (relationship) can be defined as “the personal relationship between a subordinate and their immediate supervisor, and this definition has the sense of ‘social connections’ based on mutual interest and benefit” (Wong, Ngo and Wong 2003:484). Chen and Tjosvold (2007:173) conceptualised a good supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* as “a quality relationship that determines the appropriate behaviours and treatment of each other”.

2) Co-worker relationships (horizontal):

According to Sias and Cahill (1998), an individual is likely to have more peer relationships than any other kind of relationship in the workplace. Research has shown that a healthy relationship between co-workers is positively related to job productivity and job satisfaction (Clampitt and Downs 1993). Yager (1997) also pointed out that a positive co-worker relationship can make work more enjoyable and enhance individual creativity.

2.3 Trust in the Workplace

Trust has drawn great attention as an important concept in management, psychology and economics disciplines over recent years. However, the concept of trust had not been precisely explained (Dietz and Harton 2006).

Interpersonal trust is an important social capital that can facilitate cooperation and enable coordinated social interactions (Cohen and Prusak 2001). McAllister (1995) believes that many positive outcomes such as improving organisational learning and increasing knowledge sharing are evident when interdependent employees work effectively in a coordinated effort through trust. Ciancutti and Steding (2001) also found that trust between an organisation, leaders, and employees positively impacts on an organisation's profits and stability.

Research has shown that trust is a key factor which contributes to organisational competitiveness because it cannot be easily imitated or replicated (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis and Winograd 2000). In recent years, trust has also been shown to have a positive impact on the transfer of knowledge (Chowdhury 2005, Koskinen, Pihlanto and Vanharanta 2003). Trust brings great benefits, however, it takes a long time to build and is easily destroyed, and once it had been damaged, it is hard to regain (Martin 2002). Thus, it is important to understand the construct of trust and its influence towards successful organisational outcomes. In addition, methods for building and maintaining trust should be given careful attention by management.

2.3.1 The Definition of Trust

It is difficult to obtain a universally accepted definition of trust (Castaldo 2002, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995, Schoorman, Mayer and Davis 2007). Trust is defined as “one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is (a) competent, (b) open, (c) concerned, and (d) reliable” (Mishra 1996). Mayer et al. (1995) demonstrated that trust is the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action which is important to the trustor irrespective of their ability to monitor or control that other party. Rousseau et al. (1998) defined trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another”.

Although many definitions have been proposed, none of them could provide a comprehensive definition of trust to include all relevant characteristics. On the basis of previous research on trust, an appropriate definition of organisational trust has been adapted to include relevant characteristics outlined below:

1. Organisational trust is a psychological state (Rousseau et al., 1998); it expresses the employees’ feeling from a psychological perspective.
2. Organisational trust is a process, party A (trustor) trusts party B (trustee).
3. Organisational trust has conditions: trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to a quality that the trustee has. Scholars have different opinions for understanding trustworthiness; in general, it includes ability, benevolence, integrity and reliability (Dietz and Hartog 2006).
4. Organisational trust relates to an action: trusting. Trusting is something that the trustor does.
5. Risk-taking has been discussed as a core antecedent to, and outcome of trust (Mayer et al. 1995; McAllister 1995; Rousseau et al. 1998). Once a trust relationship is established, it cannot be certain that the trustee will have what they expected in return.

Thus, in this research the definition of trust is considered to be a risk-taking process; on the basis of the trustworthiness of the trustees, the trustor must be willing to accept the vulnerability from their psychological perspective.

2.3.2 The Dimensions of Trust

McAllister (1995) has devised an acceptable classification of trust, based on affection and cognition. The affective component refers to belief in the benevolence of the other party, inspired by moral virtues such as honesty and integrity. People make emotional investments (affective trust) in trust relationships; they must take any potential risk, must be willing to be vulnerable and show their faith in the trustees, irrespective of the trustees' ability. The cognitive component is rooted in the trustor's perceptions of the trustee's competence, past experience and the information they hold (Paille, Bourdeau and Galois 2010). The two dimensions of affective trust and cognitive trust are independent, but also interact with one another.

On the other hand, Rousseau et al. (1998) divided trust into calculus-based and relational trust. Calculus-based trust emerges based on the benefits related to economic exchange. Trustor's believe that trustees intend to repay them for their trust. Relational trust is derived from repeated interactions over time between the trustor and trustee (Rousseau et al., 1998). In previous interactions with trustees, the trustor has established belief and expectation in trustees. Emotions enter into the relationship and will lead to a long reciprocal connection. In addition, Rousseau et al. (1998) demonstrated distrust extent-deterrence-based trust; where there is no risk and no probabilities to consider.

Lewicki and Bunker (1996) identified three dimensions of calculus-based trust (CBT), knowledge-based trust (KBT) and identification-based trust (IBT). KBT refers to confidence in another's predictability, dependability and reliability. These days, with more communication interaction, and knowledge about trustees' motives, abilities and reliability play a role in the relationship, and it is suggested that this is the starting point of the development of real trust (Dietz and Hartog 2006). IBT is considered to be the confidence base upon which the understanding and internalization of each other's desires and intentions is achieved. Once IBT has been reached, the highest and most complete trust has been achieved. Figure 2-3 shows all the dimensions of trust and their degrees.

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Figure 2-3 The continuum of degrees of intra-organisational trust (adopted from Dietz and Hartog 2006)

2.3.3 The Foci of Organisational Trust

An important question was proposed about which levels of employment (managers, co-workers, and organisation) are most critical for creating a climate of trust within organisation (Masacco 2000). According to the perspective of social psychologists, trust is not about individual function, it is a relationship regulated by individuals based on the task, the situation and the referent (Zand 1972). Thus, it is essential to address referent types and situations when focusing on the development of trust (Tan and Lim 2009).

The organisational structure will also influence the referent of trust. In self-directed team based structures that operate without direct supervision, co-worker trust would presumably be the most important level of trust for the organisation. In more hierarchical structures, trust in one's immediate manager or the organisation have greater significance to the effectiveness of the organisation (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004). Therefore, the extent to which different referents of trust influence organisational effectiveness depends upon the structure of the organisation. The dominant organisation structure found in Chinese enterprises is the

hierarchical structure, which comprises different levels of management, power and authority. In order to investigate trust relationships in Chinese enterprises further, all referents of trust must be considered.

Trust referents can be divided into two categories: (1) specific individuals or groups (e.g., supervisors and co-workers) and (2) general representatives (Chen, Aryee and Lee 2005). The latter had been named diversity such as: top management, employers and organisation, but it means the same thing and can be interchangeable (Whitener 1997:393).

Researches (Konovsky and Pugh 1994, Pillai, Schriesheim and Williams 1999) have only examined the concept of trust in supervisor. There is minimal research which focuses on co-workers and organisations (Tan and Lim 2009). There is evidence however, that the status of an employee in the workplace may change between supervisors, co-workers and management (Becker 1992, Reichers 1985). It means that one employee with management position in the organisation could be the supervisors' of another employee or co-worker of the employee with the same position. Lehmann-Willenbrock and Kauffeld (2010) have suggested that multiple foci of trust may produce different organisational outcomes according to the extent of the trust, and the effort which employees put into creating trusting relationships in the workplace. This work has extended the findings by Perry and Mankin (2004) that it is necessary to consider multiple foci of trust simultaneously. Thus, the focus on single referent such as trust in a supervisor, co-workers, top management or the organisation provides a limited understanding of trust related to the other organisational factors and outcomes.

Previous studies of trust focus on single or two focal perspective known as generalized trust in which the trustor values the trustworthiness of their trustees regardless of referent type and situation (Farris, Senner and Butterfield 1973, Rotter 1967). There is a lack of research on the perceptions of trust in organisations and perceptions of other trust foci such as trust in supervisors and trust in co-workers. In this study, individual and general referents of trust will be investigated together, including trust in organisation, trust in immediate supervisor and trust in co-workers.

1. Trust in organisation

Trust in organisation relies to the willingness of employees to be vulnerable to the actions of their organisation. According to Tan and Lim (2009), such willingness will only be generated when an organisation clearly communicates its actions to its employees through informal and formal networks.

2. Trust in immediate supervisor

This concept relies on the willingness of a subordinate to be vulnerable to the actions of their supervisor whose behaviour and actions they cannot control (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). Wong (2003:483) has described trust in supervisor in the Chinese context, as “an employee’s positive expectations regarding their supervisor’s conduct and intentions, and is a form of dyadic or interpersonal trust”, which “can be viewed as a psychological state comprising of employee’s intention to accept vulnerability based upon expectations of positive intentions or behaviour of their supervisor”.

3. Trust in co-workers

This is the willingness of a person to be vulnerable to the actions of fellow co-workers whose behaviour and actions an individual cannot control (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). The term ‘co-worker’ refers to other members of an organisation with the same level of power or authority, who an employee works and interacts with during their working day (Dirks 2000, Tan and Lim 2009).

2.3.4 The Antecedents of Trust

From the perspective of social psychologists, trust is a relationship which is based on the task, situation and referent (Zand 1972). It is also believed that the perceived trustworthiness of trustees affects the process of trust (Dietz and Harton 2006).

Firstly, trust focuses on the individual factor: characteristics of the trustor, what Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) referred to as the “propensity to trust”. As one of the significant characteristics of the internalisation of national level cultural values and norms, propensity to

trust has been identified as a personality that willing to cooperation and to trust others (Huff and Kelley 2003, Zak and Knack 2001). Colquitt, Scott and LePine (2007) reviewed 249 articles that explored the antecedents or consequences of trust. Their meta-analysis showed that propensity of trust is a significant predictor of trust even when the trustworthiness forms were considered simultaneously. This personality trait was shaped by the society's culture (Fukuyama 1995). Huff and Kelley (2003) investigated organisational trust in 7 countries, including individualist and collectivist societies. The results show that the propensity to trust others is stronger in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures. The findings also show that employees in China, who are influenced by a collectivistic culture, are not willing to trust either internally or externally, which is congruent with Child's (1998) findings that low trust in China is prevalent.

Another characteristic is the political persuasion of trustors. For instance, the content of the communication satisfies the trustor's political expectations, the trustor will put the trust into action (Robinson 1996). A Trustor's political persuasion exhibits a more powerful influence over the trust process than cultural values and norms. However, there are certain domains where trust occurs, and according to Lewis and Weigert (1985), political persuasion may not always apply to the production of trust. For example, an employee might be confident in the ability of thier supervisor to show their work to others, but reluctant to share personal or even work related problems with them (Gillespie 2003). In this case, trust is only created on the extent which it is required, and not beyond.

Secondly, the content of the trust belief is another essential consideration. Butler (1991) suggested that 11 characteristics of trustees should be included to judge the trustworthiness: competence, integrity, consistency, discreteness, fairness, promise fulfilment, loyalty, availability, openness, receptivity, and overall trustworthiness. This is the view later supported by Mayer et al. (1995) who emphasized that ability, benevolence and integrity of trustee influences trust building. Ability refers to the other party's capability to carry out their obligations in term of skills and knowledge (McAllister 1995). Benevolence reflects selfless motives, a personal degree of kindness towards to the other party, and a genuine concern for their welfare (Hosmer 1995). Integrity involves adhering to a set of principles which are acceptable to the other party, encompassing honesty and fair treatment, and the avoidance of hypocrisy. If a trustee were perceived as high on all three of these factors, they are likely to be deemed quite trustworthy. Deficiencies in any of these factors would likely have a

negative effect on the trustor's level of trust. Following powerful debate between researchers, predictability (or reliability) of trustee was added to be the fourth characteristics (Cunningham and McGregor 2000, Dietz and Harton 2006, Mishra 1996). Predictability relates specifically to consistency and regularity of behaviour and as such is distinct from competence or integrity (Dietz and Hartdog 2006). Tan and Tan (2000) explored supervisors and the organisation as trust referents and found that trust in the former is affected by the perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity of the supervisor and leads to satisfaction with supervisor and innovative behaviour, whereas the latter is affected by procedural and distributive justice.

Thirdly, situational factors affect trust processes (Dietz and Hartog 2006), such as the cultural context (Yamagishi, Cook and Watabe 1998). Doney et al.'s (1998) proposition that national culture has an influence on trust-building processes is supported by Tan and Chee (2005). They demonstrated that in the Singaporean context, which is strongly influenced by Confucian norms similar to Chinese culture, affective factors of trustworthiness are much more important than cognitive factors during the trust-building process. This suggests that in China, the cradle of Confucianism, there should also be a stronger focus on affect-based trust. They also pointed out that it is natural that interpersonal trust in a Confucian-influenced society would be based primarily on emotional factors, as Confucian ideology focuses on the importance of relationships.

2.3.5 The Consequence of Trust

Trust serves to reduce the level risk in a context of uncertainty (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995, Porter et al. 1974). It is beneficial both for both an organisation and its employees. Trusting relationships enhance the attitude of employees including job satisfaction (Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander 2006) and employee participation (Driscoll 1978, Li and Yan 2009). Moreover, meta-analysis has linked job satisfaction to trust in supervisor (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002), co-workers and the employer organisation (Aryee, Budhwar and Chen 2002b).

Trust in co-workers has been linked to higher perceived organisational support, less intention of leaving the job, and higher affective commitment (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004). Trust in co-workers, top management and supervisors are highly related to the perception of the organisational openness (Thomas and Zolin 2009). Kiffin-Petersen and Cordery (2003)

also found that trust in co-workers partially mediates the relationship between an individual's propensity to trust strangers, and their preference for working in a team. McAllister's (1995) study of trust in peers showed that interaction frequency, peer-affinitive citizenship behaviour, and cognition-based trust influenced affect-based trust. Co-workers who trust each other will have positive expectations about the way their colleagues act, and their skills, which will facilitate the cooperation and teamwork, bringing a harmonious environment for the organisation (Ladebo 2006).

Positive trust in supervisors improves employee satisfaction and innovative behaviour (Tan and Tan 2000). Employees who trust in their supervisors are more likely to open their mind and develop useful new ideas, because they believe that supervisors will exert considerable effort to help and support their innovation (Fairholm 1994, Lavelle, Rupp and Brockner 2007). Driks and Ferrin (2002) reviewed the antecedents and consequences of trust in leaders, and their results found the following consequences: belief in information; organisational commitment; decision commitment; organisational citizenship behaviour; job satisfaction; satisfaction of leaders; belief in leader-member exchanges and intention to stay in the job; acceptance of influence; absence of monitoring; attribution of positive motives, mutual learning and positive outcomes such as employee co-operation and performance.

Trust in the organisation is a major predictor of employees' organisational commitment (Liou 1995). Research has also supported the notion that trust contributes towards reducing the turnover intention of employees (Mishra and Moriissey 1990, Sonnenburg 1994). Tan and Tan (2000) found that employees who trust their organisation will likely enjoy working in there, and therefore be interested in pursuing a long-term career as part of the organisation.

2.3.6 Trust and Organisational Communication

Research regarding communication had has considered it to be central to the processes of trust. It is recognised that organisational trust is communication-based, dynamic, multifaceted, and that communication influences trust by sharing information, telling the truth, and speaking with good purpose (Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001, Reina and Reina 2007). Scholars found that communication is one of 5 behaviours that can influence employee perceptions of the trustworthiness of their supervisor (Whitener et al. 1998). Ruppel and Harrington (2000) explored the link between communication and trust and found a significant

positive correlation between communication and employees' trust. Organisational communication is critical for building trusting relationships between employees and the organisation (Mayer and Gavin 2005).

As communication is a multidimensional construct, various facets of communication such as communication relationship, adequacy of information and communication channel should be taken into account while investigating its relationship with trust. Therefore, according to the purpose of this study, it considers three dimensions of supervisory and co-worker communication: adequacy of information received, satisfaction of communication relationship and quality of communication channels.

2.3.6.1. Adequacy of Information and Trust

According to Downs and Adrian (2004:52), adequacy of information refers to the types, timing and load (amount) of the information. A study found that adequacy of information is positively related to trust within the workplace. Adequate explanations and timely feedback on decisions are also associated with higher levels of trust, as is communication that is accurate and forthcoming (Sapienza and Korsgaard 1996). Thomas et al. (2009) explored the central role of communication on trust by focusing on the quality and quantity of information. Their result showed that the levels of trust in supervisors increase when the employees receive accurate, timely, and useful information. In contrast, employee trust in top management mainly depends on the adequacy of information. Accurate information, explanations for decisions, and openness, as communication factors, affects perceptions of trustworthiness and overall job satisfaction (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis and Winograd 2000). Sapienza and Korsgaard (1996) also support the position that adequate explanations and timely feedback on decisions are associated with higher levels of trust, as communication is accurate and forthcoming. Research showed that when communication received by employees is of high quality and frequency, this has a positive effect on creating a trust climate in the organisation. Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak (2001) found that the amount of information about job-related and organisational issues is important to the trust employees have in top management and immediate supervisors. De Ridder (2006) points out that the level of employee trust in management is associated with the quality of non-task related information, which allows employees to know the goals, problems or policies of the organisation. Moreover, Marques (2010) found that high quality communication can improve

interaction between employees and employers, which in turn brings greater trust and understanding within the organisation.

2.3.6.2. Communication Relationships and Trust

The supervisory-subordinate communication relationship determines the exchange of the messages between the two parties (Downs & Adrian 2004). Employees are more likely and more willing to exchange information with their supervisors when they perceive their supervisor to be open, patient, trustworthy and reliable. A high quality communication relationship makes a significant contribution towards the enhancement of a positive trust climate within an organisation. Willemyns et al. (2003) explored the patterns of trust and power in manager-employee relationships, and found that supportive and empathetic managers, who are perceived as trustworthy, raise the trust which employees have in their supervisor and employer organisation. Wong et al. (2003) also revealed that subordinates who have a better relationship with their supervisors are likely to be more loyal to and trust their supervisors. In China, interpersonal relationships (*guanxi*) between supervisors and subordinates have been found to predict the prevalence of trust in supervisor in JVEs (Chen and Tjosvold 2007, Wong, Ngo and Wong 2003). Similar results have also been found in companies under different types of ownership in China. Han et al. (2012) used a qualitative approach and found that trust in supervisor is the outcome of *guanxi* between superior and subordinate. They suggest that from the perspective of both the supervisor and subordinate, the perceived benefits of trust lead each party to reciprocate. A positive exchange and attributes enable the development of obligation to reciprocate the other party, whereby trust reflected the willingness and stability of the other party's intention to maintain the relationship over him. Although subordinates are aware that the reciprocation of their supervisor is likely to be sometimes in the future, they implicitly trust that the supervisors will eventually fulfil their obligation and the ongoing *guanxi* exchange process is maintained.

2.3.6.3. Communication Channel and Trust

Communication channels are important for conveying information. Due to continuous innovation in technology, the number of communication tools available to organisations today is always growing. There is very little research around the impacts which the

development of revolutionary communication tools have on communication behaviour in organisations, and subsequent and employee reactions to this.

Research has shown that the success of communication depends on the choice of communication channels, because the ideas of the sender must be delivered clearly and explicitly. Previous studies have revealed that the formation of trust is related to communication channels. Huang et al. (2008) found that face-to-face communication has a more comprehensive impact in terms of facilitating the mechanisms for building interpersonal trust.

2.3.6.4 Hypotheses

The above considerations have led to the development of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Organisational communication is positively correlated with trust

An emerging trend within the literature about organisational communication and trust, is that employees maintain distinct perceptions about multiple foci within the organisation, and therefore direct meaningfully different attitudes and behaviours towards them. For example, employees can have different extent to which they are satisfied with the communication towards multiple organisational foci, such as supervisors and co-workers (Thomas and Zolin 2009). Researchers of trust have taken a similar perspective, debating over how employees perceive the trustworthiness of multiple entities such as their immediate supervisor, co-workers or the organisation as a whole (Tan and Tan 2000; Tan and Tim 2009). Therefore, this study seeks to gain a more complete conceptualisation of employee experiences by explicitly recognising the different relationships maintained by employees with individuals and groups who are part of their organisation, including the organisation itself. Although important contributions relating to the multifoci perspective have been made in organisational communication and trust literature, these developments have progressed, for the most part, independently of one another. Thus, to capture a more complete picture of the relationship between organisational communication and trust, this study does not only consider the dimensions of communication, but also integrates multifoci research and theory in these literatures. This research investigated the relationships between co-workers, and between supervisors and subordinates. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1a: Supervisory communication is positively correlated with trust in supervisor

Hypothesis 1b: Co-worker communication is positively correlated with trust in co-worker

Hypothesis 1c: Supervisory communication is positively correlated with trust in organisation

Hypothesis 1d: Co-worker communication is positively correlated with trust in organisation.

2.3.6.5 Trust in individuals and trust in organisation

According to Chen et al (2005), referents of trust can be divided into two categories: (1) specific individuals or groups (e.g. supervisors and co-workers) and (2) generalized representatives (e.g. organisation). This study has highlighted three types of trust which provide scope for further investigation: ‘trust in supervisory’, ‘trust in co-worker’ and ‘trust in organisation’. Definitions for these concepts have been proposed by writers in various academic fields (Mayer et al. 1995; Tan and Lim 2009). Trust in supervisor has been described by Mayer et al (1995) as an employee’s willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of their supervisor whose behaviour and action they cannot control. Tan and Lim (2009: 46) defined trust in co-worker as “the willingness of a person to be vulnerable to the actions of fellow co-workers whose behaviour and actions that person cannot control”. Finally, trust in organisation involves an employee’s trust in both the employing organisation and the organisation’s senior management. From the perspective of employees, supervisors belong to this level of management and therefore represent the organisation. The behaviour of supervisors and their daily interaction with subordinates can therefore change employee’s opinions regarding organisational trust. Tan and Tan (2000) found that employees who trust their supervisor also have high levels of trust in the organisation. Wong et al. (2003, 2010) found that the trust which Chinese employees have in their supervisor is positively associated with their trust in organisation, particularly in joint venture enterprises (JVEs). In addition, research found that if employees trust in their co-workers, this is likely to result in the development of trust in their employer organisation (Tan and Lim 2009). Such findings from

research lead us to the assumption that individual referent trust is associated with trust in organisation. The following hypotheses are postulated:

Hypothesis 2: Trust in individuals is positively correlated with trust in organisation.

Hypothesis 2a: Trust in supervisor is positively correlated with trust in organisation

Hypothesis 2b: Trust in co-worker is positively correlated with trust in organisation

2.4 Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment of an employee generally involves them identifying positive and far reaching professional development goals and committing themselves and their career to the future of the organisation. Mowday et al. (1982:225) conceptualize the strength of the psychological relationship between the individual and the organization in terms of the individual's commitment to the organization. It is important for those working at the management level to value the organisational commitment of employee, because uncommitted workers tend to leave, and replacing them can be expensive.

Studies have found other benefits associated with organisational commitment. Meyer et al. (2002) found that high levels of commitment improve job performance. In addition, research has demonstrated that those employees who are committed to their jobs have been associated with organisational citizenship behaviours (Ilies, Scott and Judge 2006), and positive job performance (Carmeli and Freund 2004). More importantly than organisational effectiveness, employee commitment can enhance the reputation of the organisation (Mishra 2007).

Organisational commitment does not only have beneficial outcomes for the organisation, but also for individual employees themselves. Employees who are more committed to the organisation that they work for are likely to obtain better opportunities for promotion, increase their rate of pay, and develop their competence levels (McLean et al. 2005, Park 2007).

Therefore, there are a number of benefits taken from the commitment of employees, to both parties and an understanding of how this commitment can be enhanced should be developed, as it is essential both for the success of the organisation and of individuals.

2.4.1 The Definition of Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment has been extensively defined as a result of various researches, but it continues to draw criticism for lack of precision and concept redundancy (Varona 2002). At present, there are at least two different approaches to conceptualizing organisational commitment.

Firstly, the side-bets (exchange) perspective sees commitment as an outcome of contribution transactions between the organisation and member, for example appealing offers and contributions from the employer. In this conceptualization, the individual perceives associated benefits such as pension plans as positive elements in a process of exchange. This gives employees a willingness to remain attached to the organisation. Thus, commitment is defined as a function of the rewards and costs associated with organisational membership (Alutto, Hrebiniak and Alonso 1973, Farrell and Rusbult 1981).

Second is the psychological perspective which considers organisational commitment as a three-component orientation. These components are: (a) an identification with the goals and values of the organisation, (b) a willingness to focus strong effort towards helping the organisation achieve its goals, (c) a strong desire to maintain membership of the organisation (Buchanan 1974, Porter et al. 1974). Organisational commitment is defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation” (Mowday, Porter and Steers 1982).

For the purpose of this research, organisational commitment is defined as psychological attachment and identification with the organisation. The commitment between employees and the organisation are reciprocal. With the consideration of organisational goals, values and systems in mind, employees might decide to do their best for their organisation, and in return, the organisation provides better work conditions, better salaries, and offers promotions.

2.4.2 The Dimensions of Organisational Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1997) proposed a three-component model of organisational commitment which is widely accepted by organisational behaviour scholars. The model proposes that organisational commitment is experienced by the employees as three simultaneous mindsets encompassing affective, normative and continuous organisational commitment.

- **Affective commitment (AC)**

AC refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Individuals who are affectively committed to the organisation are emotionally attached, and identify with their employer organisation. Research suggests that employees whose work experiences are consistent with their expectations and satisfy with their basic needs tend to develop a stronger affective attachment to the organisation (Dunham, Grube and Castenada 1994, Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf 1994, Meyer, Allen and Smith 1993).

- **Continuance commitment (CC)**

CC refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organisation. Continuance commitment reflects economic ties to the organisation based on the perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organisation. Research into CC suggests that this component consists of two related sub-dimensions: personal sacrifice and perceived lack of alternatives (Dunham et al. 1994; Meyer et al. 1990). Both personal sacrifice and perceived lack of employment alternatives increase the costs of leaving the organisation.

- **Normative commitment (NC)**

NC refers to the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation (Allen and Meyer 1990). The normative component of commitment concerns the employee's belief about their responsibility to the organisation. Employees who are normatively committed to the organisation remain because "they believe that it is the right and moral thing to do" (Wiener 1982).

2.4.3 The Antecedents of Organisational Commitment

Antecedents of AC can be divided into:

(a) Personal characteristics which are related to the employees' age, gender, tenure, education and personal dispositions, such as need for achievement, affiliation and autonomy. For example, highly educated employees have low commitment to the organisation because they may have more opportunities to change the jobs (Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

(b) The amount of time employees have worked in an organisation has a strong impact on their affective commitment. Employees will feel a bond to their organisation when they feel comfortable in their work place (Allen & Meyer 1990: 4-15).

(c) In addition, it is believed that organisational characteristics could be the predictor of AC. Factors such as the reliability of the organisation, reliability, openness to new ideas, feelings of equity and having a clear purpose, enable employees to feel comfortable in the work place. The equity of company policies and the ways by which the organisation transfers information such as feedback to employees, are linked to affective commitment (Meyer and Allen 1997).

(d) Considerable amounts of research have shown that organisations with a positive and supportive working environment will increase the affective commitment of employee (Jeon 2009, Park 2007).

Antecedents of CC have been found to be the employee's recognition that their organisation is making relevant investments (e.g., lack of pensions, attractive salary, and skill transferability), and perceived employment alternatives (Meyer and Allen 1991).

Normative commitment occurs when employees accept the norms and values of the organisation. This is called socialization experience (Cheng and Stockdale 2003, Meyer and Allen 1991). Another antecedent of normative commitment is organisational investment. For example if the company has helped an employee to finish college by funding tuition fees and living expenses, that employee feels an obligation to repay company.

2.4.4 Consequences of Organisational Commitment

Committed employees are highly related to positive organisational outcomes: low drop-out rates (Arnold and Mackenzie 1999, Arthur 1994, Cohen and Hudecek 1993, Somers and Bimbaum 2000), more dependable employees (Angle and Lawson 1994), better performance by employees (Suliman and Iles 2000), higher productivity levels (Tjosvold, Sasaki and Moy 1998) and higher levels of involvement of employees (Brett and Stroh 1997).

Turnover intention (a measurement of whether a business or organisation's employees plan to leave their positions or whether that organization plans to remove employees from positions), and job satisfaction, have been found to be the most common consequences of the three dimensions of organisational commitments. Allen and Meyer (1996) found that AC, NC, and CC are all negatively correlated with turnover intention. In the Chinese context, CC is not as strong as NC at predicting turnover intention (Cheng and Stockdale 2003).

Job satisfaction is another widely researched consequence of organisational commitment. It correlates with all components of organisational commitment, but to a different extent. AC has shown the highest positive correlation with job satisfaction, compared with NC and CC (Allen and Meyer 1996).

However, the three components of organisational commitment (AC, NC, and CC) have different consequences for work-related behaviours such as attendance, in-role performance, and organisational citizenship behaviour, with the exception of turnover intention (Meyer and Allen 1991).

Affective commitment is positively related to work performance such as citizenship, and extra-role behaviour. However, normative commitment is less related to those work performance. The concept of continuance commitment opposes this as research has shown it is either unrelated or negatively related to work performance (Allen and Meyer 1996, Lee 1992). The relationship between organisational commitment and employee well-being has attracted significant attention. The results conducted by Meyer et al. (2002) show that affective commitment is negatively correlated with both self-reported stress and work-family conflict. In contrast, continuance commitment is positively related to those variables.

As previous studies have shown, it is desirable to foster affective commitment whenever possible, while, normative commitment is positive but modestly related to work performance, unlike affective commitment. Furthermore, the concept of continuance commitment is not consistent with the other components of organisational commitment.

2.4.5 Trust and Organisational Commitment

Trust produces a long lasting and harmonious relationship between two people, and allows one entity (such as employee) to count on the statements and promises of another entity (Paille, Bourdeau and Galois 2010). This seems to be a logical process that the employees are willing to take the risk and stay in the organisation when they feel the company demonstrating concern and support to the employees. In other words, once employees decide to trust their organisation, they will show their commitment to it. Previous research had revealed that trust that significantly impact on the organisational commitment (Albrecht and Travaglione 2003). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: Trust in the workplace is positively related to organisational commitment

Drawing on previous studies, trust in supervisor is associated with organisational commitment (Tan and Tan 2002). Connell, Ferres and Travaglione (2003) found that trust in managers would significantly predict affective commitment and continuance commitment. This implies that positive relationships between managers and subordinates will increase the commitment of employees. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3a: Trust in supervisor is positively related to organisational commitment

Trust in co-workers has also been related to higher perceived organisational support, lower turnover intention, and higher affective commitment (Ferres et al. 2004). Tan and Lim (2009) explored trust in co-workers and trust in organisation together, and found that trust in organisation mediates trust in co-workers and affective commitment. In reality, high trust in supervisor is especially important when changes are made in the organisation. Neves and Caetano (2009) found evidence to support the concept that employee's trust in their

supervisor would be enhanced when they recognize the benefits of the organisational change and are affectively committed to the change. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3b: Trust in co-worker is positively related to organisational commitment

Trust in the organisation facilitates organisational commitment; it had been recognised as the referent of trust most related to organisational commitment. Researchers found that co-workers, who perceive that the organisation's action and goals are beneficial, can easily establish the trust belief with organisation and vice versa (Tan and Lim 2009). Allen and Meyer (1997) demonstrated that trust in organisation is highly associated with organisational commitment. According to Gilder (2003), workers who showed more trust in top management showed more commitment toward their organisation than contingent workers who are insecure about their jobs. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3c: Trust in organisation is positively related to organisational commitment

2.4.6 Organisational Communication and Organisational Commitment

It has been observed that organisational communication creates the conditions for commitment. The key goals of internal organisational communication are the promotion of a positive sense of belonging by employees, and the consequent creation of relationships characterized by commitment (Meyer and Allen 1997, Welch and Jackson 2007). Communication is suggested to be an antecedent of commitment rather than a consequence (Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

Research has shown that general aspects of communication such as organisational communication satisfaction (Varona 1996), climate (Guzley 1992, Van den Hooff and de Ridder 2004), organisational information provision (Ng et al. 2006), relationships with upper-level managers (Putti, Aryee and Phua 1990) and quality of communication (Thornhill, Lewis and Saunders 1996) can enhance the commitment of employees.

Researchers also found that employees are strongly committed to the organisation if they are able to obtain adequate information to perform their task, and if this information is presented to them via formal channels, rather than by informal means. Postmes, et al. (2001) investigated the close relationship between communication and commitment. They found a positive but moderate correlation between organisational communication and organisational commitment. However, both organisational and unit level commitment are more related to vertical communication, which involves the strategic exchange of information and communication with management, than horizontal communication, which is informal, involves exchanges with proximate colleagues, and tends to have socio-emotional content (Postmes, Tanis and Wit 2001).

The quality of feedback that employees receive from their supervisors has a positive connection to their level of attachment or affective commitment to the organisation (Beck and Wilson 1997, Francis-Smythe and Smith 1997).

Research has investigated the relationship between organisational communication and affective commitment. However, normative commitment and continuance commitment have not been fully addressed. In general, early literature assumes that normative commitment and affective commitment are closely aligned, and that they are positively related to organisational communication (Bambacas and Patrickson 2008). However, continuance commitment does not have the conformity characteristics of affective commitment and normative commitment to all dimensions of organisational communication. Meyer (1990) identified that support practices such as feedback, which is one dimension of organisational communication, was negatively related to continuance commitment. Additionally, continuance commitment happens when employees are conscious that leaving their organisation would be detrimental to their financial situation. In comparison with affective commitment and normative commitment, continuance commitment was weakly related to psychological contracts (Van Dijk 2004). This research was conducted from the psychological perspective, so monetary elements were not considered. It assumes that the sub-items of organisational commitment have the same traits as organisational communication, so that the research can explore the relationship between organisational communication and commitment from both sub-items and composite angles. Therefore continuance commitment will not be considered in this research. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived organisational communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

Supervisors tend to be the most influential people in an organisation, and their behaviour leads to employees' commitment to the organisation. Research in this field shows that the role of a supervisor in developing relationships and communicating with subordinates is important for building team-oriented commitment (Bakar, Mustaffa and Mohamad 2009, Eisenberger et al. 2002, Stinglhamber and Vanderberghe 2003). Van Vuuren et al. (2007) found the direct and indirect effects of supervisory communication on employee's affective commitment in a Dutch telecommunications company, while Bakar et al. (2009) also found that high levels of supervisor-subordinate communication encourage subordinates to commit to the team. Communication was demonstrated to be a multi-dimensional construct, and interest has been raised by communication scholars to investigate how sub-dimensions of communication impact on organisational commitment. Downs et al. (1996) discovered that 9 communication factors were significantly related to organisational commitment. These are organisational perspective, organisational integration, personal feedback, relationship with supervisors, horizontal and informal communication, communication climate, media quality, relationships with subordinates, and communication with top management. Additionally, De Ridder (2004) found that high quality task-related information can improve an employee's sense of commitment to the organisation. Based on these findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4a: Perceived supervisory communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

There is lack of research considering the relationship between horizontal communication and organisational commitment. However, the importance of co-worker communication for promoting organisational effectiveness and employees performance cannot be dismissed. Postmes et al. (2001) examined the relationship between vertical and horizontal communication and organisational commitment, using the social identification approach. The results show that horizontal communication, which is normally informal, is positively related to organisational commitment. However, vertical communication predicts organisational commitment better than horizontal communication. Allen (1992) also found that organisational commitment is significantly related to quality of information received from co-

workers as well as communication relationship. Conclusions can also be drawn from Patricia (2005), who indicated that the quality of the information employees receive from supervisors and co-workers, is positively related to their commitment to the organisation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived co-worker communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

2.5 The Mediating Role of Trust and Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behaviour. The theory suggests that individuals engage in a series of interdependent interactions that generate obligations among the exchange parties (Blau 1964, Mitchell, Cropanzano and Quisenberry 2012). When one party provides another with a valued and beneficial resource, an obligation is generated to return a beneficial resource. A series of mutual exchanges strengthen the quality of the relationship between the exchange parties, which thereby produces beneficial and productive behaviour (Blau 1964).

Blau (1964) identified the differences between economic and social exchange. He argued that economic exchange involves more of a short term exchange of tangible resources, whereas social exchange is often described as subjective, relationship-oriented interactions between employers and employees characterized by an exchange of socio-emotional benefits, mutual trust and commitment, involving a long-term focus and unspecified open-ended commitments (Blau 1964, Lavelle, Rupp and Brockner 2007). Compared with those in economic exchange relationships, individuals in social exchange relationships tend to more strongly identify with the person or entity with which they are engaged (Rupp and Cropanzano 2002).

2.5.1 Limitations to social exchange theory

Existing research literature related to social exchange theory (SET) has raised four questions which will be discussed in the following section.

1. The limits of trust research have been investigated

Trust is a promising relational construct (Driks and Ferrin 2002). It is seemingly important for understanding exchange. Although there has been some evidence and research so far on this topic, it has generally been sparse (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005).

Previous research has identified organisational communication as positively related to organisational commitment (Varona 1996; Van den Hooff and de Ridder 2004), but this research tends to neglect the influence of trust. Trust is a necessary condition (Blau 1964) for each party to 'make a move'. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) note that in a relationship of exchange, something must be given and something returned. The process begins when at least one participant 'makes a move'. In this relationship, organisational communication is deemed as an input. If the communication system offered by the organisation meets the quality and quantity desired by employees, then during the exchange, supervisors build relational contracts and fulfil employee's perceptions of the organisation's obligations, which allows employee's trust in the organisation to grow (Whitener 1997). As a result, employees are more likely to commit to the organisation. Trust, as a balance point, explains why a social exchange relationship is maintained over time

2. Limits of research with a multifoci perspective

Literature related to the multifoci perspective has also shown that employees differentiate and react to the level of social exchange they perceive themselves having with the organisation (e.g. perceived organisational support, organisational trust, and organisational identification), the supervisor (e.g. perceived supervisory support, supervisory trust, and leader and member exchange), and the team (e.g. perceived team support, work-unit identification, and team member exchange) (Aryee, Budhwar and Chen 2002b, Bishop, Scott and Burroughs 2000, Masterson et al. 2000b, Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006, Stinglhamber and Vanderberghe 2003, Walumbwa and Cropanzano). From a multifoci perspective, an employee's perceived social exchange with a particular party should impact their behaviour directed at that party (Masterson et al. 2000b). The majority of research has focused exclusively on trust in organisation, thus there is little understanding about the potential influence of trust in co-worker and trust in supervisor on the social exchange theory.

A focal exchange partner (supervisors, co-workers, and organisation) offers communication that is satisfied by the other party (employees). Over time, this positive inducement enhances the trustworthiness of trustees (Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001). Under the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960), when one invokes an obligation to give benefits to another party, individuals may create an imbalance in their relationships and try to avoid becoming indebted to that exchange party. Consequently, employees will feel obligated to reciprocate the good deeds of the focal exchange partner, in this case the organisation.

3. Little research has investigated organisational communication as a social exchange theory term

As Blau (1964:98) noted “the establishment of exchange relations involves making investments that constitute commitment to the other party. Since social exchange requires trusting others to reciprocate, the initial problem is to prove oneself trustworthy”. Researchers investigated the impact of different variables as an investment of SET within the organisation. Perceived organisational support (POS) has long been conceptualised in SET terms (Eisenberger et al. 1986, Eisenberger et al. 2002). When POS is high, workers are more likely to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Moorman, Blakely and Niehoff 1998), high job performance (Eisenberger et al. 2001) and reduced absenteeism (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Organisational justice, which represents the fairness of the organisation towards its employees has also been examined by social exchange theorists. They found that justice could engender long-term social exchange relationships such as psychological contracts, leader-member exchange, commitment, support and trust (Lavelle et al. 2007). There has been growing recognition of the importance of different human resource practices to employees’ social exchange relationships including POS and organisational justice, however, organisational communication has not been paid enough attention by SET researchers.

Effective communication can be deemed as an investment in the organisation, and empirical evidence has shown that satisfactory communication with the organisation consequently increases the trust relationship (Muchinsky 1977, O'Reilly 1977, Thomas and Zolin 2009, Whitener et al. 1998). Thus, social exchange theorists have found it valuable to explore whether organisational communication can be used by employers as an investment to facilitate positive attitude and behaviour of employees.

4. Dearth of social exchange theory research in China

SET focuses on reciprocity and negotiated agreements. Although the norms of reciprocity may be a universally accepted principle (Gouldner 1960), the degree to which people and cultures apply reciprocity principles varies (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). Reciprocity plays a vital role in Chinese people's daily lives and organisational lives owing to the relational-oriented nature of Chinese society (Hofstede 2001). Yang (1967:291) defined Chinese reciprocity as "marked by its long history, the high degree of consciousness of its existence, and its wide application and tremendous influences in social institutions". Reciprocity of favour exchanges is the most pervasive rule guiding Chinese social and economic interactions. The norm of returning financial and socio-emotional debts is essential for building and nurturing relationships in the workplace (Tsui and Farh 1997). Chinese employees respond quite positively given their strong adherence to the reciprocity norm, because they interpret the give and take in balanced reciprocity, as signs of trust and investment (Wu et al. 2006). By contrast, westerners may deem balanced reciprocity as a mainly economic transaction (Sahlins 1972), they are unlikely to expect long-term relationships as Chinese employees do.

2.5.2 Model development

This section aims to demonstrate the development of model in this study based on social exchange theory. As has been discussion above, this study will aim to fill the gaps in social exchange literature by investigating the role of multifoci trust in social exchange relationships within Chinese enterprises. It will also investigate the impact of organisational communication as an input and investment of the company on the development of employee commitment.

Drawing from social exchange literature, the formation of social exchange relationships can be conceptualised as a two-phase process (Lavelle et al. 2007). Therefore, in this study a two-phase diagram (shown in Figure 2-4) has been produced to present relationships and exchange in a working environment. In the first phase, satisfactory communication provided by supervisors and co-workers creates an employee's trust in individual parties (e.g. trust in supervisor, trust in co-workers), which puts the social exchange relationship in motion. Once this process begins it enters the second phase, in which employees reciprocate via trust in organisation. SET focuses on a relatively discrete set of contingent transactions. It is possible

that the series of transactions in the workplace has gone on for some time and could continue into the future. As a result of this continuity, the output from a past transaction can be the resource exchanged in the future transaction (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005). In this case, trust in organisation as the outcome of a two-phase social exchange process is also the input for the next transaction. Employees would engender their commitment to the organisation when they perceive that their organisation can be highly relied on.

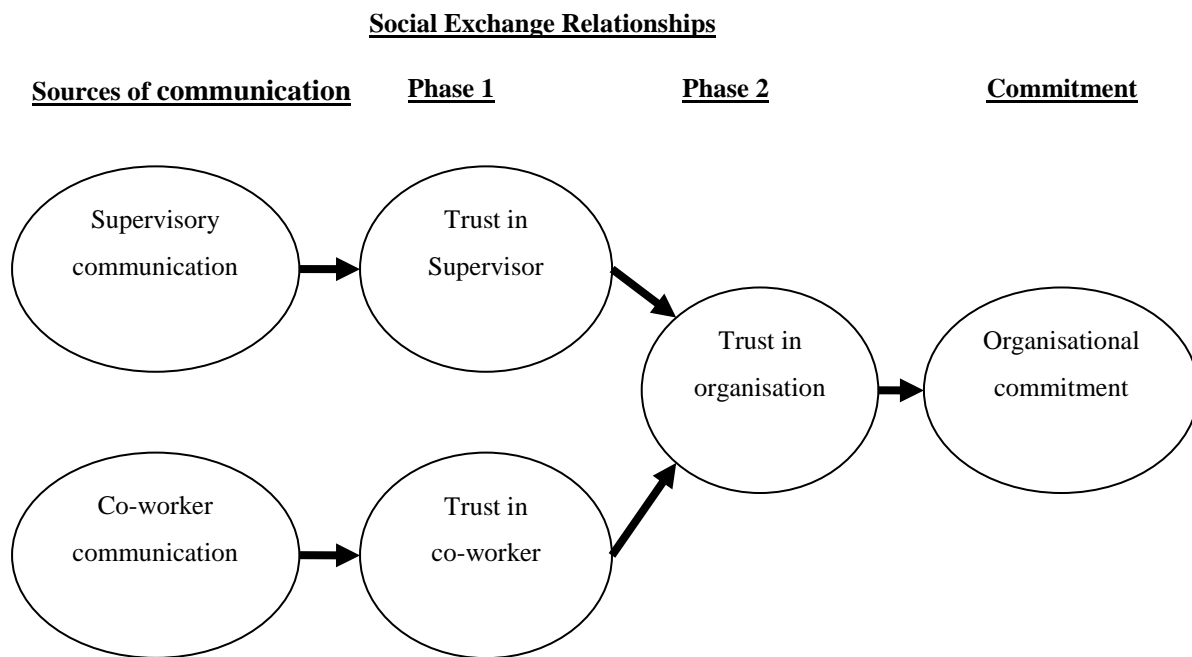


Figure 2-4 The social exchange relationship model

Phase 1:

According to Konovsky and Pugh (1994), trust is a manifestation of social exchange, and social exchange underpins the expression of mutual loyalty, goodwill and support. Trust will mediate the relationship between communication and the employee commitment. Thus, the model developed by this research, suggests that the employer and employees can exchange satisfactory organisational communication against organisational commitment through organisational trust. As noted earlier, the focal exchange partner is the condition of the employees' perceptions of reciprocation (Masterson et al. 2000a). This study will consider trust in individuals and general referents; co-workers, supervisors and the organisation. Therefore, it offers the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5a: Trust in supervisor is a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication with supervisor and trust in organisation.

If employees are unsure of the trustworthiness of their co-workers, consistently do not receive timely, sufficient or multiple messages from co-workers, they may feel overlooked or uninvolved. This makes accurate information more important for influencing trust in organisation, because it potentially gives employees a sense of security and membership. Employees who perceive co-workers as trustworthy peers may rely less on their co-workers for accurate information, making horizontal communication less influential in shaping trust in organisation. The above considerations led to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5b: Trust in co-worker is a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication with co-worker and trust in organisation.

Phase 2:

Social exchange theory (Blau 1964) proposes that organisations are full of social and mutual long terms transactions between actors in the organisation. In contrast with economic exchanges, social exchanges refer to relations that incur future non-specified obligations (Konovsky 2000). Relational trust should engender reciprocity of the same nature and reinforce the emotional bond (Tremblay et al. 2010). Employees who have a higher level of trust in their organisation will fulfil their obligation in the future. Employee's organisational commitment is one of the obligations they return to their trustworthy working environment. Previous research has yielded consistent results that trust in organisation is positively related to organisational commitment (Aryee, Budhwar and Chen 2002b, Gould-Williams and Davies 2005). Tan and Tan have observed that trust in organisation plays a mediating role between trust in supervisor and affective commitment. Recently, Tan and Lim (2009) found that trust in organisation also mediates the relationship between trust in co-workers and affective commitment. Therefore, it can be assumed that organisational trust affects organisational commitment by influencing perceived individual trust, which in return prompts employees to reciprocate with organisational commitment. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 6a: Trust in organisation is a mediator of trust in supervisor and organisational commitment.

Hypothesis 6b: Trust in organisation is a mediator of trust in co-worker and organisational commitment.

Following Figure 2-5 is hypothesised mediated model 1, indicating the employees' interaction with supervisor. It demonstrated that supervisory communication leads to trust in supervisor, trust in organisation and organisational commitment. Hypothesised mediated model 2 (Figure 2-6) shows the connections between co-worker communication, trust in co-worker, trust in organisation and organisational commitment. The hypotheses proposed in this study are cumulatively presented in Figures 2-5 and 2-6.

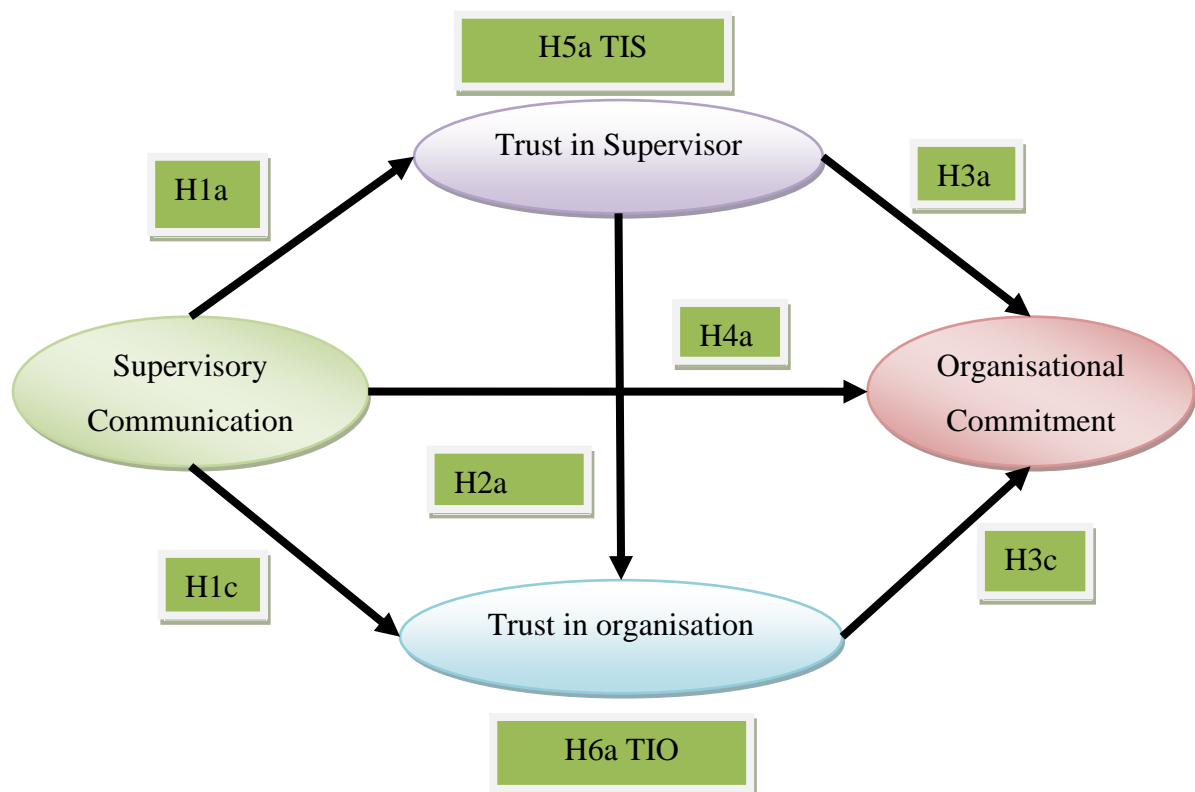


Figure 2-5 Hypothesised mediated Model 1- Interaction with supervisor

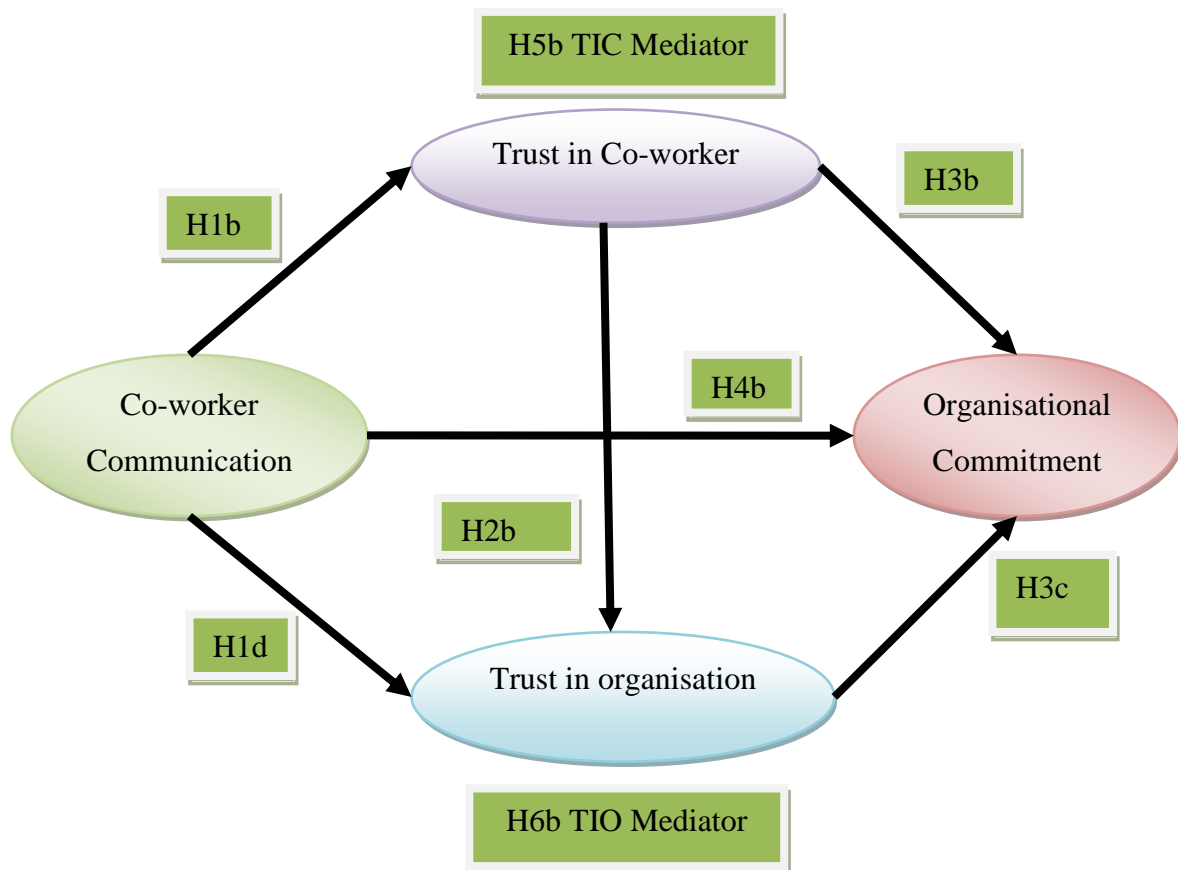


Figure 2-6 Hypothesised mediated Model 2- Interaction with co-worker

2.6 Summary

A review of relevant Literature has revealed a number of areas that need additional attention through previous research. Firstly, research has investigated the relationship between organisational communication and trust, only examining the single focus of communication. For example, Thomas et al. (2009) explored the impact of the quantity and quality of information on the trust relationship. However, Downs (1977) is of the opinion that organisational communication is multidimensional. A full understanding of the relationship requires a simultaneous examination of all the dimensions of organisational communication, and an understanding of the most effective types of communication.

Secondly, trust is a critical component of social exchange; many scholars consider its relationship with organisational justice and perceived organisational support and work outcomes. There is a lack of research that explores communication, trust and commitment based on the theory of social exchange.

Thirdly, research (Jeon 2009, Pillai, Schriesheim and Williams 1999) has not considered all possible trust referents. Employees differentiate between multiple exchange partners in the workplace; supervisors, subordinates, co-workers, top management and the organisation as a whole (Becker 1992, Dietz and Harton 2006). Thus, there is a limited understanding of how an organisation offers satisfactory communication to its employees related to their work outcomes. So far, research has only investigated a single focus of trust within the organisation.

Finally, according to Hofstede's (1980) culture theory, there are two major cultures; individualist cultures mostly found in Western countries such as the USA, and collectivist cultures found in Eastern countries such as China. Most previous research has been carried out in the context of individualist cultures. Findings of worker's attitudes and behaviours are strongly dependent on situational factors (Brett, Cron and Slocum 1995, Doran et al. 1991), and collectivist Eastern cultures are dramatically different to individualist Western cultures. This means there is a lack of knowledge about communication, trust and commitment in the workplace in collectivist cultures, offering the potential for further research in this area.

Due to the limitations of the previous research, this research is going to examine and validate an integrated social exchange theory model of organisation communication, trust foci (co-worker, supervisor and organisation), and organisational commitment (affective commitment and normative commitment). It infers that this is a reciprocal relationship, whereby the organisation provides satisfactory communication to the employees and improves the trust relationship, so in turn employees are willing to involve themselves, and feel obligation to the organisation.

Figures 2-6 and 2-7 display the theoretical models examined by this research. There are a total of 8 variables in each model; three associated with communication, three with organisational trust, and two related to organisational commitment. Anticipated findings are that effective communication between an organisation and its employees will lead to enhanced trust relationships in the workplace, and in return employees will demonstrate high commitment to the organisation. Moreover, this research is expected to find that trust is a mediator of the relationship between trust in the workplace and organisational commitment on the basis of social exchange theory.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

Research methodology is a body of knowledge that enables researchers to clarify and analyse methods, indicating their limitations and options, identifying their presuppositions and consequences, and relating their potential for advances in research (Miller 1983). The role of successful research methodology cannot be ignored. Appropriate research methodology encompassing the research paradigm, data collection, and analysis methods has significant implications for the research findings (Limpanitgul 2009).

A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman and Bell 2007). It is distinctly different from research methods, which are simply the technique for collecting data. A choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (Bryman and Bell 2007: 40). This is essential for expressing the connection between variables, which is the aim of this research. It is therefore important to consider research design in relation to the research questions being studied for the project, and consider the appropriate method for the desired research findings. Constraints and ethical issues that a study will inevitably encounter must also be taken into account (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).

The previous chapters have conceptualized the constructs that are used in this dissertation. This study mainly focuses on examining the relationship between the foci of trust (co-workers, supervisors, and the organization), organisational communication and commitment. This chapter presents the research design and methodology adopted to explore the research aims, objectives and proposals set out in chapter one. In this section, the aims, objectives and hypotheses are firstly restated and then the general research strategy and approach are explained. The adopted methods of data collection and analysis will be explained and justified.

Saunders et al. (2007) consider research methodology as “onion”, which contains layers from the outside working in: philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, techniques, and procedures, an illustration of which is shown in Figure 3-1.

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Figure 3-1 The research “onion” (Saunders et al. 2007)

Research philosophy: the way the researcher sees the world and guides the problem.

Research approach: the design of the research (inductive and deductive)

Research strategies: the method for accomplishing the research goal

Research choices: the measurement of data (qualitative or quantitative)

Time horizons: the frequency of data collection

Techniques and procedures: the tools to carry out or implement the strategy. The means of designing a scientific and rigorous research method which adequately solves the research questions can be seen as peeling a “research onion”. Before you get to the core of the onion, several important layers need to be peeled and all of the research layers must be consistently employed when conducting research. This study uses this analogy to demonstrate the peeling of the onion in a step by step process for a critical research design. The following subsections demonstrate philosophical positions, research approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons and analysis techniques of this study.

3.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of the research is the main priority element to be identified.. This research intends to investigate the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises. It will also endeavour to investigate how trust environments can increase employees' commitment to their organisation by adopting scientific and systematic organisational communication.

3.3 Research Assumption

This study is based on certain assumptions. These are documented below:

- **Ontological Assumption**

Human beings are unique and capable of reasoning on their own, therefore the researcher made sure not exclude the possibility that employees might act differently in an environment other than the one used for the research.

- **Epistemological Assumption**

The study is susceptible to the subjectivity of the researcher. Therefore, at all stages of this study, the researcher used a neutral stance to collect and analyse data in accordance with suitable and scientific research methods. The researcher attempted to reduce any elements of bias in all stages in order to make sure the findings reflect the truth.

- **Methodological Assumption**

Considering the complementary strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, a triangular paradigm was employed in the study. The researcher was able to identify weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods, and make good use of their virtues when implementing triangulation.

3.4 Research Philosophies

Research philosophies transfer important assumptions about the way in which the researcher views the world. At the same time, research philosophy reflects the principles for guiding the study of the problem. Basically, the research principles guide the researcher about how the research should be conducted and what the results of the research should accomplish. Significant concepts in this philosophy are how we define truth (ontology) and the way we

come to know or research truth (epistemology). There are three main principles in research (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran 2001):

- **Positivism**

Positivist research aims to discover universal laws that can be used to predict human activity. Positivism assumes an objective world in which science can measure and “mirror” human activity using knowledge (Lincoln and Guba 2000). Using existing theory to develop hypotheses, positivist research generates a research strategy to collect data to test those hypotheses in a value-free way. This research develops the hypotheses based on existing theories of organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. These hypotheses will be tested, leading to the further development of theory in organisational behaviour.

- **Interpretivism**

Interpretivism intends to uncover the socially constructed meaning of reality as understood by an individual or group. The interpretivist researcher is fully involved with research subjects to achieve a full understanding of a subject’s world. Interpretivist researchers construct interpretations or explanations that account for the way that subjective meanings are created and sustained in a particular setting. These findings allow multiple interpretations of truth, with weak or strong justifications. Interpretivism assumes that the world is largely what people perceive it to be (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran 2001). Thus, this research explores the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment by interpreting the data gathered from semi-structured interviews. Employee perceptions of the relationship will be evaluated, analysed and categorised to facilitate the understanding of the interactions between the three elements.

- **Criticism**

The aims of critical research are to empower people to create a better world for themselves. The critical researcher is expected to discover and uncover myths and reveal hidden meanings of reality. As a result people can be motivated to change the current situation of reality by identifying the illusions on the surface and developing a good understanding of further layers of reality. To summarise, the ontological position of this study is that reality exists outside of the mind of the researcher. This research is based on the belief that there exists a real physical world beyond our knowledge and comprehension. Moreover, that a

social world exists and is constructed, shaped and influenced by our life experiences, knowledge and desires. The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between organisational communication, trust in the workplace and commitment in Chinese enterprises. With the assistance of experts and academics in the field of human resource management in Chinese enterprises, six hypotheses based on existing literature and theory has been established. The researcher takes the “critical realism” perspective and uses critical thinking to investigate the “social laws” which are hidden by illusions on the surface of society. Although this study cannot reflect the entire picture of a studied phenomenon, the original research findings, in a certain degree of probability, can be generalised and the findings regarding relationships between the variables will help Chinese administrators to increase the trust and commitment of their employees.

3.5 Research Approach

There are two approaches that can be applied to achieve the research hypotheses:

a. Deduction: begin with developing theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and design research strategy to test the hypothesis (or hypotheses).

b. Induction: collect relevant data first then consider the conclusions to develop a theory. This focuses on hypotheses testing where in the first place, the framework is developed based on existing theory, and then hypotheses will be tested in a specific research context. As this study takes both positivist and interpretivism views, it will adopt a combination of deductive and inductive approach.

Robson (2002) lists five sequential stages through which deductive research should progress:

1. Deducing a hypothesis (a testable proposition about the relationship between two or more concepts or variables) from the theory;
2. Expressing the hypothesis in operational terms (that is, indicating exactly how the concepts or variables are to be measured), which proposes a relationship between two specific concepts or variables;
3. Testing this operational hypothesis (this will involve one or more strategies);
4. Examining the specific outcomes of the inquiry (either supporting the theory or indicating the need for its modification);
5. If necessary, modifying the theory in light of the findings.

This study deduced six hypotheses in the examination of the relationship between

organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises on the grounds of existing theory in human resource management. The hypothesised relationship between the three variables was tested by analysing the quantitative and qualitative results collected through questionnaires and interviews. Consequently, modified models were established with the understanding of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment at both vertical and horizontal level.

3.6 Research Strategies

Research strategy is the method employed to accomplish the research and defines the chosen means for collecting and analysing data. The choice of research strategy is guided by the research questions, objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, and the amount of time and resources available, as well as the philosophical underpinnings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007).

A suitable strategy for this study was chosen by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of several research strategies. This comparison is shown below in Table 3-1.

Based upon the nature of the problems to be studied in relation to the underlying research philosophy of positivist research, and the primary objectives of this research, the survey strategy will be adopted, a method which is usually associated with the deductive approach. Surveys are a popular and common strategy for business and management research and is most frequently used to answer questions about who, what, where, how much and how many (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). In addition, the data collected using a survey strategy can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships, which is exactly what this study requires. Questionnaires and interviews are both data collection techniques that belong to the general survey strategy. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, questionnaires and interviews in this study can provide more valuable insights into the problems of, and relationships between, variables.

Table 3-1 Strengths and weaknesses of possible research strategies

RESEARCH STRATEGY	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Phenomenology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information gathered and data collected are to be first-hand, and thus primary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher is prone to bias, sometimes imposing their own personal views on the subject, which may influence their interpretation of information.
Ethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to information given orally, the researcher is able to observe behavioral patterns and activities. Will form a more reliable hypothesis. Total reliance on verbal information is avoided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This can be very expensive and stressful. Observations can leave the researcher biased, or with wrong impressions.
Repertory Grid Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of innovative interview techniques which elicit responses in a semi-structured or full grid interview manner in which the researcher's frame of reference and worldview are not imposed on the respondent. A method that reliably elicits the respondent's cognitive structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion of constructs with verbal labels. Very time consuming as interviews may need to be spread over several sessions. There is also the possibility of producing an unhealthy power relationship.
Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very broad field for data collection is reduced and made accessible for information. Time and cost here are favourable, as compared to research which does not use a case study. Information obtained can be easily analysed thoroughly, before being accepted and recorded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and information may be biased if the case study chosen is not a suitable representation of the general study area. Sources of information are limited by the boundaries of the case study.
Grounded Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This provides a platform for the research to be carried out. A direction for the data to commence from. An ambiguous start is prevented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unbiased views of contributors are sometimes shut out, and the platform on which the study commences is controlled and suggestive.
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys are inexpensive and useful for describing the characteristics of a large population It could provide statistical results when analysing multiple variables. It can be administered from remote locations using mail, email or telephone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be hard for participants to recall information or to tell the truth about a controversial question.

3.7 Research Choices and Techniques

This study will apply quantitative methods and qualitative methods to examine the research questions and hypotheses. Quantitative data is easy and inexpensive to obtain from different respondents on a large scale by asking a set of questions. However, it has weaknesses including lack of flexibility in the questions asked, and the difficulty of locating appropriate samples (Wimmer and Dominick 2003). In this study, the variables measured are all subjective components which may be changeable according to the emotions of participants. In order to gain more rational and accurate thoughts from Chinese employees, qualitative research had been adopted in addition. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) describe qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible”. Qualitative research incorporated with quantitative research supports the discovery of the nuances of organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises.

3.8 Time Horizons

There are two types of study in terms of time horizons.

- **Cross-sectional studies:** this is a “snapshot” in time where data is collected on a single occasion.
- **Longitudinal studies:** this is a “diary” perspective which involves the study of people or phenomena at more than one point in time.

Longitudinal studies generally have more capacity to observe and study change and development. However it requires more time and ability to control the variables. Given the nature of the research objectives (i.e. to investigate the effects of the independent variables on employee’s commitment) and the adequate availability of prior evidence to formulate hypothesised relationships for examination, it was deemed that a cross-sectional descriptive survey was the most appropriate option for this study. In addition, the limited availability of time for this research to be undertaken, this investigation will consider the relationship

between three variables of organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises at a given snapshot in time.

3.9 Procedures

For the purpose of meeting the aims and objectives of this research, a combination of semi-structured interviews and postal questionnaires was used to collect both in-depth and generally applicable qualitative data collected in Chinese enterprises. Table 3-2 provides an overview of the specific methods used for data collection and analysis in relation to the research objectives.

In considering the methods of research to be employed for this study, the researcher developed a plan of approach and procedure for the research methods described in the previous section. The research designs map out the research objectives and the proposed key outputs (Figure 3-2).

The proposed key outputs include:

1. A list and explanation of the key issues including organisational communication, trust in the workplace and organisational commitment that form the central focus for the study.
2. Theoretical output, which includes interrelationships between organisational communication, trust in the workplace and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises (see Figure 2-2).
3. Practical outputs, which include organisational communication practices that can develop and maintain trust in the workplace, which contributes to improving organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.

Table 3-2 Summary of research objectives and related methods of data collection and analysis

Research objectives	Method of data collection
1. To identify the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication and organisational commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature Review • Discussions with experts • Discussions with academics in human resource management
2. To assess the relationship between organisational communication and organisational trust in Chinese enterprises. 3. To assess the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises. 4. To formulate and test systematic models of the relationship between trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises. 5. To measure the effect of demographic factors on trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with senior managers • Semi-Structured interviews with Chinese employees • Researcher administered delivery and collection of questionnaires

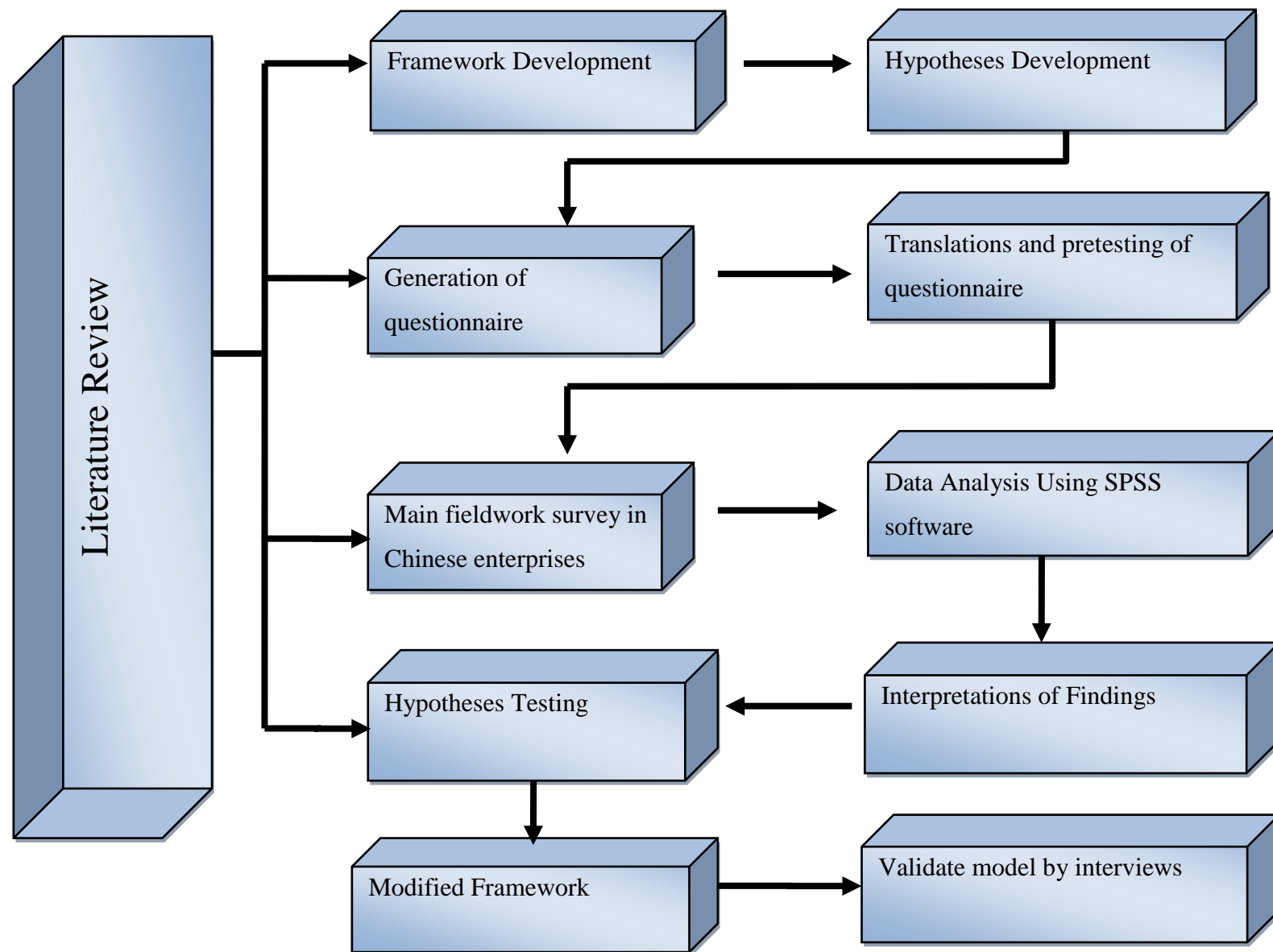


Figure 3-2 Research Programme

3.10 Research Methods

In order to obtain first-hand information of the attitudes of employees towards the research questions, a suitable research method is essential. The researcher is not ignorant to compare the advantages and disadvantages of several research methods which are represented in the table below (Table 3-3).

There is a general agreement by researchers that interviews are able to provide the richest information and reduce the confusion between questions. Additionally, questionnaires are a relatively quick and inexpensive way to collect information. In addition, personally administered questionnaires can often achieve a response rate of over 50%, which is beneficial to the hypotheses testing. Thus, with regard to the methodology comparison offered in Table 3-3, this study decided to employ face-to-face interviews and personally administered questionnaires to collect primary data.

3.10.1 Interview

A well-designed and professional interview is a key qualitative method to uncover rich information (Cavana et al. 2001). In this study, the researcher conducted the interviews in two phases; the initial pilot interviews, followed by further interviews for the main study. Interviews are a flexible approach for experts in social sciences to gather rich data which is highly related to the research questions. There are three main patterns of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured-interview. Structured interviews have a list of predetermined, standardised questions which are carefully ordered and worded in a detailed interview schedule.

3.10.1.1 Structured Interviews

A structured interview is known as standardised interview (Saunders et al. 2007). It is a predetermined list of questions in a specific order with fixed wording. The main feature of structured interview is that they include same questions in the order with the same measurement scale. Sekaran (2002) explained that structured interviews should highlight variables or factors that have appeared during the unstructured interviews and are related to the research problem, or when the researcher knows exactly at the

beginning what information is needed. As structured interviews are used to collect quantifiable data they are also referred to as quantitative research interviews.

3.10.1.2 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured in-depth interviews have more opportunities to obtain further information for the specific topic. It is more valuable than other types when it is essential to understand the constructs that interviewee uses as a basis for his or her opinion, to understand the respondent's "world" in relation to a situation or particular things, to discover unclear situations, to obtain some private data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 2002). However, they require more interviewing skills to manage the process and access valuable information in a limited time. Another factor that should be taken into account is whether or not a reasonable and sufficient amount of information related to the issues is already known. If so, then specific questions can be formulated for each of the issues (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran 2001).

3.10.1.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a mix of both structured and unstructured interviews. According to Bryman (2007) semi-structured interview refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. In this research a semi-structured type of interview was used to understand and to collect more information. Drawing on the literature review, there is adequate knowledge about organisational communication, trust and commitment. The information required in this study focuses on the opinion of Chinese employees about the current situation of communication, trust and commitment and their interrelationships. Therefore, semi-structured interviews have been employed in this study. The researcher carefully prepared the questions in terms of content highly associated with the research objectives and those which are suitable in the context of different organisations.

The semi-structured interviews for the main study were conducted face-to-face. Table 3-3 showed the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and telephone interviews. The advantage of face-to-face interviews is that it is easy to pick up non-verbal cues

which promote the development of a rapport between the two people (interviewer and interviewee) involved. The main disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is geographical limitations, a limitation experienced by this study. The researcher committed a large amount of time, money and effort to travelling to the interviewees' locations. Telephone interviews were also conducted during the pilot phase. Respondents felt less uncomfortable disclosing personal opinions over the phone than face to face. Additionally, the use of telephone interviews involves less expense and is more achievable for a researcher who is located in UK to interview Chinese employees. However, non-verbal information was missing (Wimmer and Dominick 2003). Therefore, telephone interview is not used in the main study; instead, face-to-face interview is more applicable to get more authentic perception of Chinese employees on organizational practices.

In order to control the time taken, and ensure the quality of semi-structured interviews, interviews were conducted with twenty managers in Chinese enterprises. The researchers sent the structured questions to the interviewees before the interview, so the interviewees could have a period to prepare answers for the questions. During the interview, the researcher adopted a simple process whereby the researcher reads out the questions and the interviewees give their responses.

Table 3-3 Strengths and weaknesses of research techniques

Mode of Data Collection	Advantages	Disadvantages
Personal or face-to-face interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Can establish rapport and motivate respondents 2) Can clarify the questions, clear doubts, add new questions 3) Researchers can read non-verbal cues 4) Can use visual aids to clarify points 5) Rich data can be obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Takes time 2) Costs more when a wide geographic region is covered. 3) Respondents may be concerned about confidentiality of information given. 4) Interviewers need to be trained. 5) Can introduce interviewer biases 6) Respondents can terminate the interview at any time
Telephone Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Less costly and speedier than personal interviews 2) Can reach a wide geographic area 3) Greater anonymity than personal interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Non-verbal cues cannot be read 2) Interviews will have to be kept short 3) Could influence the sample, for example obsolete telephone numbers could be contacted, and unlisted ones omitted.

The interviewees were asked six main questions which address research objectives B-D (see section 1.2).

1. How does your organisation communicate with employees to create trusting relationships with employees?
2. How does your organisational communication medium impact on trusting relationships with employees?
3. How do communication relationships with employees create trusting relationships with employees?
4. How does adequate information exchange with employees create trusting relationships with employees?
5. How do trusting relationships in the workplace create a sense of commitment of employees?
6. How does your organisational communication practices, associated with trusting relationships, with employees create a sense of commitment with employees?

Each question was related to each objective. The respondents were required to confirm the hypotheses and provide rich information of the questions. At the end of the interview, the researcher also asks the interviewees' opinion on the two hypothesized models by explaining how the relationship between organizational communication, trust and commitment was operated in the Chinese workplace.

3.10.2 Questionnaires

Following a review of the literature on research methodology and the assistance of experts in the field of human resource management and management psychology, a relativist approach was adopted as the overarching research strategy for this study. The relativist research approach, which belongs to epistemological philosophy, allows the use of cross-sectional design to measure multiple factors simultaneously and examine the potential underlying relationships within the latent variables (Easterby-smith, Thorpe and Jackson 2008:90). Due to multiple factors involved in the research, a relatively large sample was required, and the quantitative data produced by this became the main source of information in this study.

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data which reflects respondent's views of the relationships between organisational communication satisfaction, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese organisations. Compared with other methods (e.g. interview and observation) questionnaires are widely used for explanatory research which examine and explain relationships between variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). However, there are several methods of administering questionnaires, which vary the cost, time taken and likely quality and response rates. Saunder et al. (2007: 358) compared 3 questionnaire methods according to their likelihood of causing a number of possible distortions in the results. The results of their study are shown in Table 3-4. Compared with internet and intranet mediating and postal questionnaires, delivery and collection methods generally achieve a higher response rate of around 50% and sometimes, 98% is achievable. For these reasons mentioned above, delivery and collection questionnaires provide a practical and economical solution for collecting data in this particular research work. Thus, the researcher decided to use the delivery and collect method to collect quantitative data. With HR managers' accompany, the researcher went to the workplace and delivery the questionnaires in person. Each respondent was required to finish all the questions and handed it to the researcher within 30mins. If the respondents could not finish on time, the researcher come and collects it after one week.

Table 3-4 Main attributes of questionnaires (source: Saunders et al. (2007:358))

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3.11 Identification of the Population Sample and Selection of a Sample Frame

3.11.1 Study population

The target population includes the employees who worked in different levels of the Chinese companies including joint venture and state-owned enterprises. Employees who have worked in their organisation for less than one year were not included because their perceptions of organisational communication satisfaction; trust and organisational commitment are unlikely to be properly developed so far. The reason for choosing Chinese employees as the population sample is to examine the interrelationships between the three variables in a non-Western context, and fill a gap in research.

3.11.2 Sample

There are millions of enterprises with large numbers of employees in China. Considering the limited time and budget, it was unpractical for the researcher to survey the entire population. In order to choose an accurate sample which is representative of the target population, and collect highly reliable data to investigate the research hypotheses, the data from a suitable population sample frame was collected from 5 different organisations in China consisting of three SOEs and two JVEs in Jiangsu province of Eastern China, whereby the economic is developing very fast. These five organisations are all involved in the petrochemical industry, which is the main business section controlled by Chinese government. Table 3-5 shows the information related with these five organisations in terms of years of existence, fixed investment, amount of employees, annual profit (2011), and their partnerships. All the organisations were established more than 10 years with good profit.

Table 3-5 Profiles of the five case organisations

Company	Years of existence	Fixed investment (RMB Billion)	Employees	Annual profit (RMB Billion)	Partnerships
SOE1	25	7	1200	2	China
SOE2	20	0.3	600	0.1	China
SOE3	25	3	1100	1.5	China
JVE1	15	>1	300	0.3	China and England
JVE2	10	>15	1800	12	China and Germany

3.11.3 Postal questionnaire sample population

As a result of solicitations, five Chinese companies located in Nanjing the capital city of Jiangsu Province agreed to participate in this study. There are around 600 employees in each company, most of whom work in the front line, where one telephone is shared with 10 or more employees. Due to their working environment, they are difficult to reach through the internet or telephone, and therefore the most convenient way to invite them to complete the questionnaire was to visit them personally while they have a break. This method is agreed by HR managers in these five companies. Considering Chinese culture, personal delivery is deemed to be a more polite and effective way of increasing responses, rather than doing an e-survey or telephone survey.

Personal delivery method achieves a high response rate of around 50% (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). However, this requires the researcher to spend a significant amount of time delivering and collecting the questionnaires. In order to speed up the process, HR managers from each organisation were enlisted to distribute questionnaires during the most convenient times for employees. This allowed a total of 1300 questionnaires to be sent out to the sample population.

3.11.4 Content of the questionnaires

Each questionnaire starts with an informed consent form, which includes the description of the study, and the benefits and risks to the participants. It is also informs them that all the data received are for research purposes only, and anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Participants were also offered the possibility to receive the final results of the research if they enclosed their email address, if they were interested in further understanding the purpose of the research. However, individual responses will not be disclosed due to ethical and moral considerations.

This study involves explanatory research requiring data to test the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment. It is important to define the property of the data before designing the questionnaires. In this study, the data can be divided into two types:

Dependent variable: organisational commitment is the primary dependent variable; it changes in response to changes in trust in workplace and organisational communication.

Independent variables: organisational communication and trust in workplace, these two variables both influence organisational commitment.

The questionnaire adopted a 4-page Likert scale format. In order to protect the respondents' personal confidential information, a cover paper and an introductory page were added to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was combined with three constructs, a 5-point Likert response format (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to measure the following constructs:

1) Demographic variables

People with different backgrounds and experiences may impact on their propensity to trust (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995). Thus, first section of questionnaire requested

general information from the respondents. These include the respondents' current job position and gender, age, and education. In addition, this research is based in the context of an organisation where the amount of time individuals have known and worked with one another might affect their trust relationship. Therefore, the employee's tenure (in years) with the current organisation, supervisors and work unit were also asked for.

Generally, respondents were asked to rate their opinions using a 5-point Likert scale (with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree). Shorter scales with two, three, or four response categories were rated as relatively quick to use, but they were rated extremely unfavourably on the extent to which they allowed the respondents to express their feelings adequately (Preston and Colman 2000). 5-point and 7-point scale are preferred by most of researchers, because compared with even number, odd numbers of response categories allow the middle category to be interpreted as a neutral point, which provide a choice for respondents who may not be sure about the answers or issues to be addressed (Green and Rao 1970, Neuman and Neuman 1981). A number of studies have been conducted to examine the effects of different numbers of response categories on the reliability and validity of rating scale (Cicchetti, Showalter and Tyrer 1985, Schutz and Rucker 1975). Higher reliabilities were found for five-point scales than seven-point scale (Jenkins and Taber 1977, Lissitz and Green 1975, McKelvie 1978). Preston & Colman (2000) also checked the respondent preference of different number of scales and the results showed that the differences were statistically significant between the scales and five-point scale was rated as easiest to use. In this study, the researcher wants to know the employees' true feelings toward to the relationship between trust, organisational communication and organisational commitment, and will not force the participants to make a positive or negative statement. Thus, the 5-Likert scale was adopted for the questionnaire, which is easy to use and can provide accurate answers.

2) Organisational communication satisfaction variants

In the second section of the questionnaire, the respondents were required to indicate their level of satisfaction of organisational communication towards to their immediate

supervisors and co-workers in their organisation. The questionnaire adopted 24 items to collect data about employees' perceptions of organisational communication with their immediate supervisors, and 22 items were to collect data about employees' perceptions of organisational communication with their co-workers. Three dimensions of organisational communication are considered in the questionnaire, which are communication relationship, adequacy of information and communication channels.

➤ **Communication referent: supervisor**

1. Satisfaction with communication relationship:

This study measured satisfaction with communication relationship by using 6 items, rated on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Example item is “indicate your level of agreement with ‘I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor’”.

2. Adequacy of information:

To measure perceived adequacy of information, this study used a 5-point scale from (1) very unsatisfactory to (5) very satisfactory, asking about the timeliness and amount of information concerning different types of information received by them. This uses a scale of 14 items specifically asked about adequacy of information from a particular source, which is the supervisor. The left hand side of the questionnaire shows different types of information and the right hand side shows that the respondents were requested to answer the extent of their satisfaction on the amount of each type of information.

3. Satisfaction with communication channels:

This used 4 items, rated on a scale from (1) very unsatisfactory to (5) very satisfactory, to measure employee satisfaction with the amount of information through 4 different types of communication channels including 1) face-to-face 2) telephone 3) written memos, letters and notices 4) email. Questions were

preceded with “indicate your level of satisfaction with the amount of information you receive through each of the following communication channels”.

➤ **Communication referent: co-worker**

1. Satisfaction with communication relationship:

This study measured satisfaction with communication relationship by using 7 items, rated on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Example item is “indicate your level of agreement with ‘my colleagues kindly tell me when they found mistakes in my work’”.

2. Adequacy of information:

To measure perceived adequacy of information, this study used a 5-point scale from (1) very unsatisfactory to (5) very satisfactory, asking about the timeliness and amount of information received about different types of information. Using the scale of 11 items, it specifically asked about adequacy of information from a particular source which was in this case the co-worker. On the left hand side of the questionnaire, it shows different types of information and on the right hand side, the respondents were requested to answer the extent of their satisfaction on the amount of relevant information.

3. Satisfaction with Communication Channel:

Four items, rated on a scale from (1) very unsatisfactory to (5) very satisfactory, measured satisfaction with the amount of information through four different types of communication channels including 1) face-to-face 2) telephone 3) written memos, letters and notices 4) email. Questions were preceded with “indicate your level of satisfaction with the amount of information you receive through each of the following communication channels”.

3) Organisational Commitment Variants

In the third section of questionnaire, the respondents are requested to provide their views on organisational commitment. There are two dimensions of organisational commitment in this research: Affective commitment and normative commitment. This research adopted questionnaires developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), which is used widely and with high reliability.

As some research has questioned whether affective commitment survey (ACS) and normative commitment survey (NCS) have a high correlation, Meyer et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis study to demonstrate that ACS and NCS are distinct constructs. This conclusion is consistent with the results of confirmatory factor analysis done by Dunham et al. (1994), who has found that affective and normative commitment are distinguishable components of commitment. At the same time, researchers also compared a 6-item full version of organisational commitment (Meyer, Allen and Smith 1993) and an 8-item full version (Meyer and Allen 1991, Meyer and Allen 1991). The 6-item version was intended to measure employee's sense of obligation to remain in an organisation more generally and placed less emphasis than the 8-item version on socialized obligation, and their results showed that the shorter version makes affective and normative commitment more distinct from each other. This research examines the relationship between organisational communication and commitment in the consideration of different dimension, which requires that affective commitment and normative commitment are two different constructs but all predict organisational commitment well. Therefore, a 6-item ACS and NCS survey are employed in this study.

a) Affective commitment

Affective commitment measures the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. There are 6 items and responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert Scale. Example items include: "I feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation", and "I feel like part of the family at my organisation".

b) Normative commitment

Normative commitment measures the employee's obligation to continue employment. There are 6 items and responses were made on a 5-point Likert Scale. Example items include: "This organisation deserves my loyalty", and "I feel obligation to remain with my current employer".

4) Trust variants

In the fourth section of questionnaires, Organisational trust was measured with 24 items from Ferres' (2002) Workplace Trust Survey (WTS). The scale assesses overall beliefs in good intentions of organisation participants as well as the degree to which they trust in various actors in the organisation. It not only measures the trust in the organisation, but also measures the intra-organisational referents at various levels of the hierarchy, including trust in immediate supervisors and trust in co-workers.

a) Trust in organisation

Trust in organisation is measured using an 8-item scale. It contains affective, cognitive, behavioural and normative items. Examples of the item are measured: "I have positive feelings about the future direction of the company" and "I think that the company offers a supportive environment".

b) Trust in supervisor

Eight items composed this scale. Participants were expected to assess their faith in their direct supervisor. Examples of items are "I feel that my manager in the company listens to what I have to say" and "I think that my manager appreciates additional efforts I make".

c) Trust in co-worker

Trust in co-workers is measured using an 8-item scale taken from Ferres (2002). It has been evaluated in Australia, South Africa (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004) and Germany (Lehmann-Willenbrok and Dauffeld 2010), the substantial coefficients

of internal homogeneity have confirmed this is a reliable indicator of co-worker trust. Items deal with the employee's perception of co-workers' trustworthiness and related behaviours. An example of this item is: "I believe that my co-workers support me if I have problems".

3.11.5 Comparison of trust measures

According to past research, different foci of trust vary its connection with organisational outcomes (Tan and Tan 2000; Tan and Lim 2009). It is hard to decide which level of trust is critical for creating a climate of trust, and which level of trust is key to changing the organisational outcomes, unless the foci of trust are examined simultaneously (Perry and Mankin 2004).

Table 3-6 listed 11 researches related to trust in the last 20 years. Some research has not considered trust at an individual level. McAllister (1995) concentrates on organisational trust, but only deals with dyadic interpersonal trust. Most of the measurements of trust only take a single focus into account. Mayer and Davis (1999) examine the top management trust, which ignore the importance of individual trust in the workplace. Cummings and Bromiley's (1996) OTI scale measures trust between different units within an organisation at a group level, and inter-organisational trust between separate organisations, which also neglects the trust at a individual level such as trust in supervisor or trust in co-worker. Compared with other measurements, workplace trust survey (WTS) developed by Ferry and Tavaglione (2003) not only measure trust in close relationships (trust in co-workers and trust in immediate manager), but also consider trust at an organisational level. In order to get a comprehensive understanding of trust, it is important to measure trust at different levels, thus WTS was used in this study (McAllister 1995).

Table 3-6 Comparison of measures of trust

	Author	Year	Items	Form of trust	Content of the belief	Referents
1	McAllister	1995	11	Belief	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability; General; Uncategorisable	Peer
2	Cummings and Bromiley	1996	12	Belief	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability;	Other department
3	Clark and Payne	1997	23	Belief and decision	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability; Uncategorisable	Employer/management/most managers
4	Brockner et al.	1997	7	Belief	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability; General;	employer
5	Mayer and Davis	1999	21	Belief	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability; General;	Top management
6	Shockley-Zalabak et al.	2000	45	Belief and Action	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability; Uncategorisable	Supervisors, co-workers, peers, management, senior/top management, and the whole organisation
7	Tyler	2003	7	Belief	Benevolence; Integrity; Predictability;	Top management and immediate supervisor
8	Huff and Kelley	2003	4	Belief	Competence; Integrity; General;	Everyone in the participating organisation
9	Gillespie	2003	10	Decision	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability;	Immediate supervisor; team member
10	Ferry and Travaglione	2003	28	Belief and actions	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability;	Organisation; co-workers; immediate supervisor
11	Tzafrir and Dolan	2004	16	Belief	Benevolence; Competence; Integrity; Predictability;	Specific core employees or managers (as a collective group)

3.11.6 Instrument translation and pretesting

Saunders et al. (2007) asserted that translation is extremely important for international research, especially if the questions have an identical meaning to all participants. The research was conducted in Chinese enterprises, thus all questionnaires were conducted in Chinese, which helps to ensure that respondents are offering accurate responses.

The questions were parallel translated by the researcher into English. These were then verified by and two translators who are linguistic experts back-translated into English respectively. Then the translators compared the two Chinese translations to the English version item by item to assess the equivalence and consistency. Through revision and discussion of the three questionnaires, finally, a common consensus was reached.

Verification of research instruments in each cultural context is critical (Douglas and Craig 2006), thus the comprehensive Chinese version was sent to the experts including the company's representative from the sample company and human resource department experts to examine the instrument for face validity. With their suggestions based on the Chinese culture and wording, some modifications were made to facilitate understanding by the Chinese employees.

3.11.7 Piloting the questionnaire

Bell (2005) recommends that in order to get reliable and valid results, questionnaires should have a trial run. The initial drafts of the questionnaires (both the English and Chinese versions) were shown to academics including the researcher's supervisors at Coventry University in the UK and to HR personnel in the Chinese Enterprises. The initial questionnaires were also tested on 5 Chinese employees who were not part of the final research investigation. According to the results, and suggestions and contributions made by University and enterprise staff the final version of the questionnaire was established. The researcher ensured that the final questionnaire was clear, simple and understandable with an attractive layout while avoiding double-

barrelled questions, leading or emotive questions, and questions which are too complex or ambiguous. The questionnaire was administered after the refinement.

3.11.8 Administration of the questionnaire survey

A small scale pilot study was conducted to check the instrument's clarity and to ensure the ease of completion before it was administered to a large sample. The questionnaire survey was delivered and collected on 11th February 2011 directly to a convenient sample of participants from 2 Chinese organisations. The following table 3-7 shows the number of received copies and response rate in the small scale pilot study. Forty-five copies of questionnaire sent to SOEs and sixty-seven copies sent to JVEs. Of the 112 participants, 99 completed questionnaires were received. However, not all copies are qualified to do the analysis as they are not completed finished. The number of qualified questionnaires is 86, which results in 76.7% response rate. It is higher than the normal response rate (50%) for delivery and collection method. This might be explained by the fact that Chinese do not easily reject the requests asked in person. The demographic characteristics of respondents are also shown in table 3-8. Forty-eight respondents (43%) aged over 40. Fifty-eight (67.4%) out of 112 respondents have been worked in their companies for more than 10 years and are familiar with the issue surrounding organisational communication, trust and commitment.

Table 3-7 Percentage response to the pilot study

Company name	Number of copies sent	Number of copies received	Non-defective response (copies)	Initial response rate (%)	Non-defective response rate (%)
SOEs	45	39	34	86.7%	75.5%
JVEs	67	60	52	89.5%	77.6%
Total	112	99	86	88.4%	76.7%

Table 3-8 Demographic characteristics of participants

DC	Category	SOE (F)	SOE (P)	JVE (F)	JVE (P)	Total (F)	Total (P)
Gender	Male	22	44.9%	27	55.1%	49	57
	Female	12	32.4%	25	67.6%	37	43
Age	under 29	12	100.0%	0	0.0%	12	14
	29 to 39	17	65.4%	9	34.6%	26	30.2
	40 to 49	5	10.9%	41	89.1%	46	53.5
	over 50	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	2.3
Highest level of education	High school diploma	8	32.0%	17	68.0%	25	29.1
	Three-year college	9	37.5%	15	62.5%	24	27.9
	Four-year college	11	39.3%	17	60.7%	28	32.6
	Masters or above	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	9	10.5
Tenure with the company	1 to 3 years	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	8	9.3
	3 to 5 years	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	8.1
	5 to 7 years	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7	8.1
	7 to 10 years	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	6	7
	over 10 years	11	19.0%	47	81.0%	58	67.4
Position in the company	Normal workers	24	55.8%	19	44.2%	43	50
	Junior manager level	9	27.3%	24	72.7%	33	38.4
	Medium manager level	1	11.1%	8	88.9%	9	10.5
	Top manager level	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	1.2
	Total	34	39.5%	52	60.5%	86	100

Note: F for frequency; P for percentage. DC for demographic characteristic

3.12 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to consistency. Although for a questionnaire to be valid it must be reliable, this is not sufficient on its own (Saunders et al. 2007). Internal consistency refers to the homogeneity of items in a measure or the extent to which item responses correlated with the total test score (Hinkin 1995). This therefore measures the consistency of responses across either all the questions or a subgroup of the questions from the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha will be used to calculate the homogeneity of the data.

Based on the results of the reliability test in the pilot study, six items were removed due to low reliability. This included 5 items relating to communication relationship and one item relating to normative commitment. One reason may be that the respondents felt uncomfortable and confused while they are being asked about the involvement of communication relationships in their personal life. For example they were required to show their perspective on the statement of "I am familiar with the family members of my supervisor and have personal contact with these members". Another reason could be related to the negative feelings Chinese people tend to associate with words such as "unconditionally obey" and "guilty". The respondents often chose the response "totally disagree" once they saw the unpleasant words. This assertion is consistent with the results of pilot study; in which 80% of respondents totally disagreed with the statement of "I will feel guilty if I leave the company". For those reasons mentioned above, six items were not used in the main study.

The following Table (3-9) demonstrates the reliability of sub-scales and scales in the pilot study and main study. Due to the reasons mentioned above, 6 items were not included when testing the internal consistency. The data showed that reliability cronbach's alpha (α) was all above 0.8, indicating that all the items predict their constructs well.

Table 3-9 Reliability of the scales and sub-scales

Scale	Sub-Scale	Number of Items	Pilot Study Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Main Study Cronbach's Alpha (α)
OCS	Communication relationship with supervisor	3	0.752	0.808
	Adequacy of the information from supervisor	14	0.934	0.941
	Communication channels with supervisor	4	0.896	0.89
	Total scale composite reliability	23	0.948	0.954
OCC	Communication relationship with co-workers	5	0.88	0.909
	Adequacy of the information from co-workers	11	0.929	0.925
	Communication channels with co-worker	4	0.856	0.848
	Total scale composite reliability	22	0.943	0.947
OCT	Affective commitment	6	0.944	0.933
	Normative commitment	5	0.884	0.875
	Total scale composite reliability	12	0.945	0.937
TIW	Trust in supervisor	8	0.953	0.954
	Trust in co-worker	8	0.921	0.936
	Trust in organisation	8	0.944	0.942

Note: OCS for Organisational Communication with supervisor; OCC for Organisational Communication with co-worker; OCT for Organisational Commitment; TIW for Trust in the workplace

3.13 Construct Validity Analysis

This section describes the construct validity of the six variables measured in this study. Construct validity refers to the extent to which the measurement questions actually measure the presence of those constructs intended to be measured (Saunders et al. 2007). To validate the constructs, each indicator must show convergent and discriminant validity (Campbell and Fiske 1959). This study uses a confirmatory factor analysis procedure, recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), to test the

convergent and discriminant validity of the scales. Convergent validity was inferred from an examination of the individual indicator's factor coefficients on its posited underlying construct factor (Huang and Michael 2000, Kim and Kim 2010). Discriminant validity examines whether two constructs differ.

3.13.1 Assessing Measurement Models

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of the six-factor structure with the remaining 76 items (6 items were following the reliability test). CFA is appropriate for investigating construct validity, because it allows direct examination of the degree to which specific items jointly load on their hypothesised factors (i.e., convergent validity) and display negligent cross-loadings on other factors (i.e. discriminant validity) (Bollen 1989, Krammer, Seibert and Liden 1999). In order to evaluate the fit of the proposed models, Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) computer software version 18 was used. AMOS, developed by IBM, is more advantageous due to its ease of connectivity with SPSS. In addition, AMOS can quickly create models to test hypotheses and confirm relationships between observed and latent variables.

Goodness-of-fit estimates the difference between the sample covariance used to obtain the parameter estimates and a predicted covariance matrix based on the parameter estimates (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Several indicators were used in this study to judge the goodness-of-fit of the model, which included the Chi-Square (CMIN), Degree of Freedom (df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

Chi-Square (χ^2) is defined as the assessment of fit of a specific model as well as the comparison between two models. The χ^2/df was used in order to lessen the sensitivity of the χ^2 tests to sample size. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) point out that χ^2/df values of 2 to 5 can be regarded as a good fit. CFI is the degree of fit between the hypothesized and null measurement models; NNFI refers to the relative improvement in fit of the researcher's model compared with a baseline model, considering degrees of freedom; RMSEA estimates a hypothesis of close fit between the model and the

population (Kline 2005). Bollen and Joreskog (1993) recommended examining the extent to which the pattern of indicators is supportive of the model rather than relying on a single indicator of fit. Therefore, this study considered a pattern of indicators mentioned above to examine the quality of the factor structure. According to Hoe (2008), the value of CFI, NNFI, GFI and AGFI equal or greater than 0.9 indicates a good fit. Hoe (2008) suggested that a cut-off value close to 0.08 for RMSEA is supportive of a good fit of the model in relation to the data.

3.13.2 Convergent Validity Analysis

In this study, convergent validity of the scale was assessed by the significance of each indicator factor loading on its designed construct and its standard error. If the factor loading is greater than twice its standard error, it indicates that the construct has good convergent validity, and vice versa.

First of all, CFA was conducted to test convergent validity for 11 first-order sub-constructs: three sub-dimensions on organisational communication with supervisor, three sub-dimensions on organisational communication with co-workers, two sub-dimensions on organisational commitment, one dimension on trust in supervisor, one dimension on trust in co-worker, and one dimension on trust in organisation. Afterwards, an overall confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the model. Table 3-10 shows the overall range of factor loading to the designated factor using CFA and their extracted average variance.

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) asserted that testing the measurement models before the structural models would allow re-specification of the measurement models. For this study, six measurement models were presented for six latent variables. Each measurement model demonstrating factor loading is interpreted as regression coefficients estimating the direct effects of the factors on the indicators (Kline 2005). As a rule of thumb, a factor loading of 0.45 is required for an item to remain as part of that factor (Hair 2006). Fornell and Larcker (1981) also suggested that the average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed the 0.5 criterion. In this study, as Table 3-10 shows, the AVE of all the 11 first-order constructs is above 0.5, which represents good convergent validity.

Table 3-10 Factor loading and average variance extracted for the sub-construct

Sub-construct	Range of factor loadings	Average Variance Extracted
Communication relationship with supervisor	0.71 to 0.86	0.6455
Adequacy of information from supervisor	0.6 to 0.79	0.543
Communication channels with supervisor	0.75 to 0.88	0.6706
Communication relationship with co-workers	0.82 to 0.88	0.7061
Adequacy of information from co-workers	0.57 to 0.8	0.5411
Communication channels with co-workers	0.66 to 0.85	0.5909
Affective commitment	0.79 to 0.85	0.6977
Normative commitment	0.67 to 0.87	0.6446
Trust in supervisor	0.83 to 0.87	0.7205
Trust in co-worker	0.69 to 0.85	0.6523
Trust in organization	0.79 to 0.84	0.6727

3.13.3 Discriminant validity

This study adopted the pairwise comparison methods to assess discriminant validity. This method involved firstly constraining the estimated correlation parameter of two constructs to 1, and then performing a chi-square difference test on the value obtained for the constrained and unconstrained models (Joreskog 1971). If the chi-square value in the unconstrained model is lower than that in the constrained model, then the discriminant validity is achieved (Bagozzi and Phillips 1982). Anderson and Gerbing (1988) complemented the assessment of discriminant validity by testing that the confidence interval (\pm two standard errors) around the correlation estimate between the two factors did not include 1.0. Additionally, the discriminant validity test should occur in one pair of factors at a time, rather than as a simultaneous test of all pairs of interest.

3.13.4 Assessing trust in supervisor

First of all, 8t items for trust in supervisor were put into CFA to test convergent validity. The factor loading of each indicator was higher than 0.45, ranging from 0.83 to 0.87, and significant at $p < 0.01$ level. The coefficient of each item was greater than twice their individual standard error, which indicates good convergent validity for the trust in supervisor measurement model which is displayed in Figure 3-3.

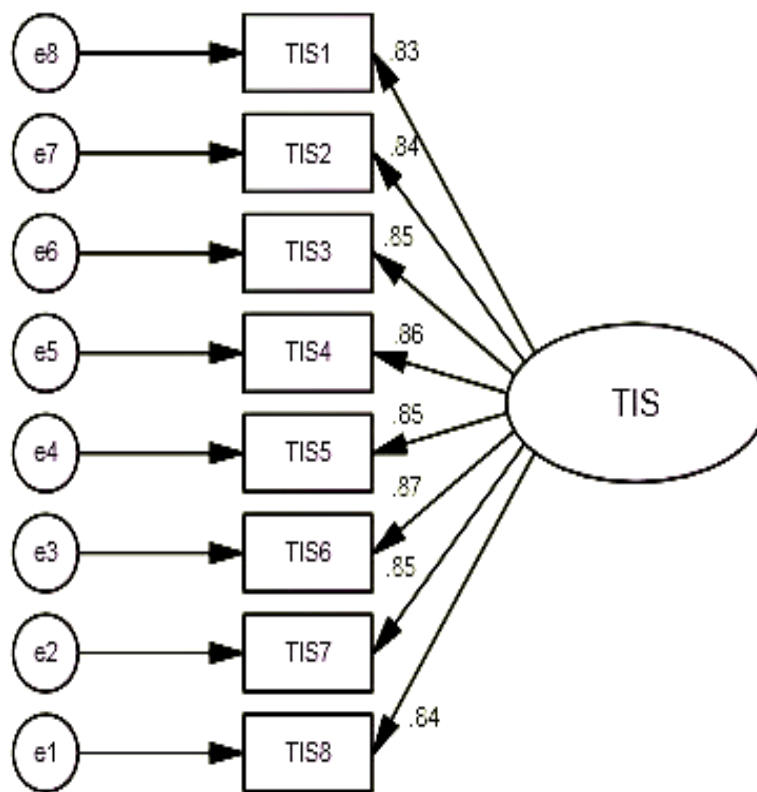


Figure 3-3 Model for trust in supervisor

3.13.5 Assessing trust in co-worker

Secondly, the measurement of trust in co-worker was examined. As Figure 3-4 shows, CFA demonstrates that the factor loading of each indicator is higher than 0.45, ranging from 0.69 to 0.84, and significant at $p < 0.01$ level. The coefficients of each item are greater than twice their individual standard error, which indicates good convergent validity for the trust in co-worker measurement model.

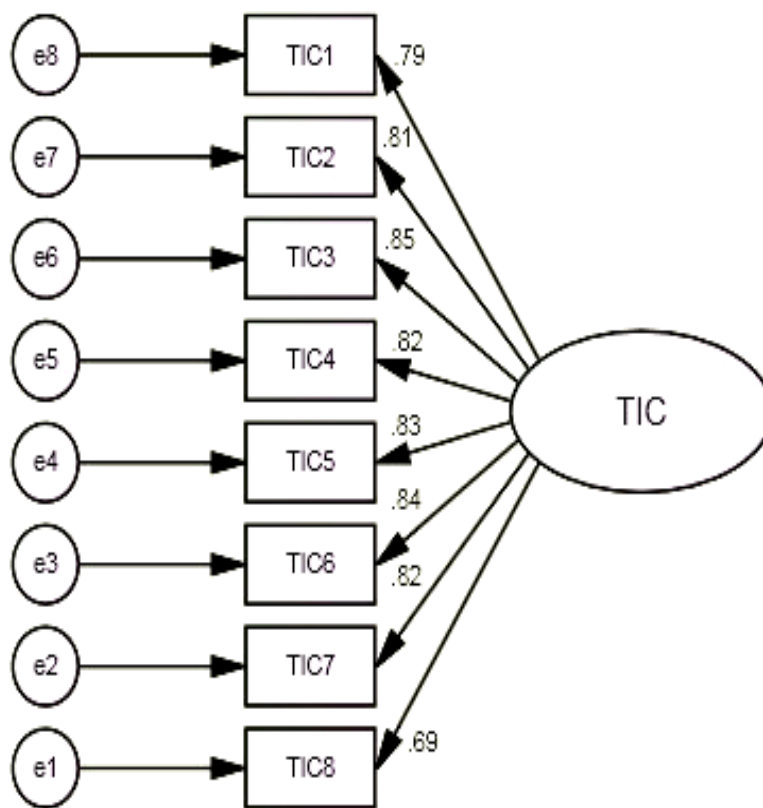


Figure 3-4 Model for trust in co-worker

3.13.6 Assessing trust in organisation

Eight items for trust in organisation were put into CFA to test convergent validity. As Figure 3-5 shows, the factor loading of each indicator is higher than 0.45, ranging from 0.79 to 0.84, and significant at $p < 0.01$ level. The coefficients of each item are greater than twice their individual standard error. The fit indices show good fit of the trust in co-worker measurement model to the data.

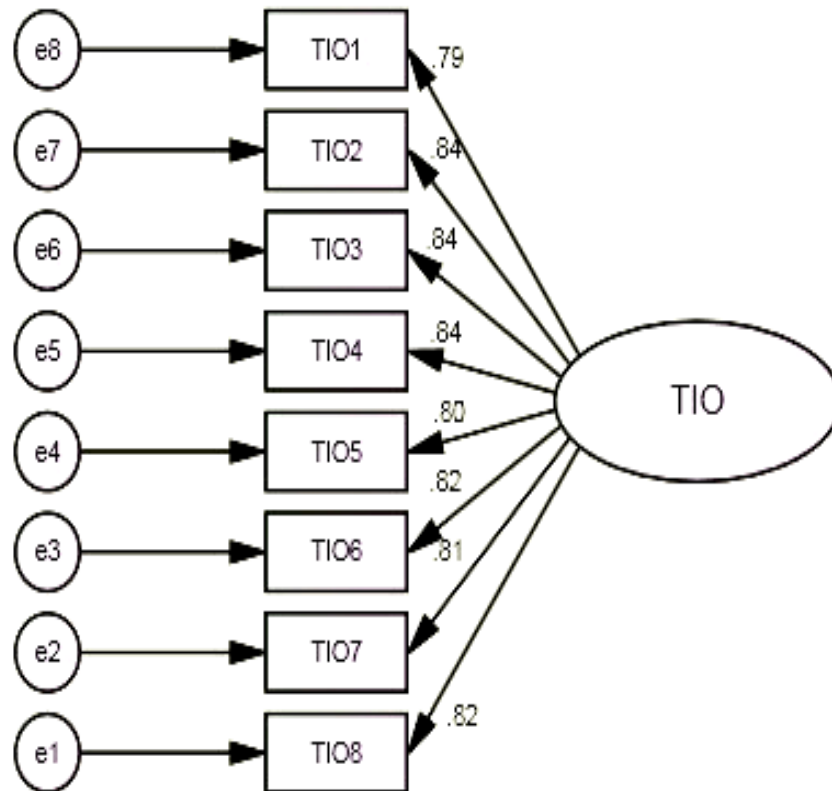


Figure 3-5 Model for trust in organisation

3.13.7 Assessing organisational communication with supervisor

In the fourth step, this study examined the measurement model of supervisory communication in the organisation. 21 items of three sub-scales were entered into CFA. The factor loading of each indicator to their theoretical construct is shown in Figure 3-6.

Convergent validity:

The factor loading of the communication relationship with supervisor (CRS) sub-scale produced a range from 0.71 to 0.86. The range of factor loading of adequacy of information from supervisor sub-scale (AIS) is from 0.6 to 0.79, while the communication channel with supervisor (CCS) sub-scale generated a range from 0.75 to 0.88, factor loading of each indicator is larger than twice standard errors at the significant level $p < 0.01$. In addition, the factor loading of CRS, AIS and CCS on supervisory communication in the organisation (OCS) are 0.84, 0.91 and 0.9, which are higher than their respective two standard error ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, convergent validity exists in the second-order supervisory communication in the organisation construct.

Discriminant validity:

The pairwise comparison of CRS, AIS and CCS constructs are tested separately, and the results can be seen in Table 3-11. All chi-squares in the unconstrained models are different from constrained models, and none of the confidence intervals (95%) around the estimated correlation between the pair of the scale includes 1.0. Thus, it can be inferred that three sub-scales in the supervisory communication in organisation construct, show discriminant validity.

Table 3-11 Chi-square difference test between each pair of scales employing AMOS 18

Model	DF (res)	Chi-square		p-value (unc)	GFI (unc)	Lower bound	Higher bound
		(res)	(unc)				
CRS vs AIS	119	1288.466	1126.501	0.000	0.805	0.712	0.814
AI vs CCS	135	1349.194	1194.738	0.000	0.807	0.784	0.857
CRS vs CCS	14	225.127	135.446	0.000	0.951	0.705	0.808

Note: “Res” stands for restrained model; “unc” stands for unconstrained model.

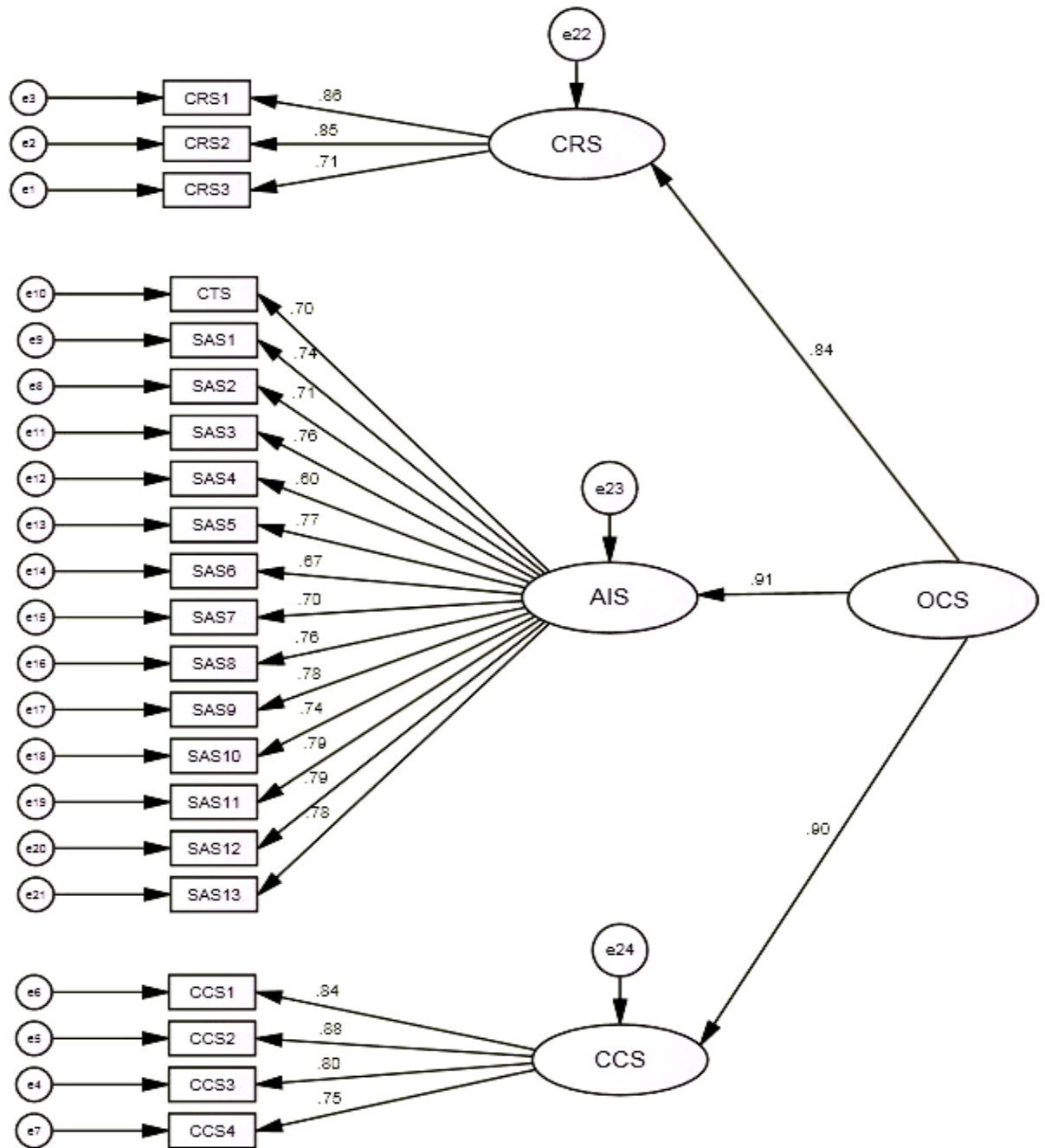


Figure 3-6 Model for supervisory communication

3.13.8 Assessing co-worker communication in the organisation

In the fifth step, this study examined the measurement model of co-worker communication in the organisation. 20 items of three sub-scales were entered into CFA. The factor loading of each indicator to their theoretical construct is shown in Figure 3-7.

Convergent validity:

The factor loading of the communication relationship with co-worker (CRC) sub-scale produced a range from 0.82 to 0.88; the range of factors loading from the ‘adequacy of information from co-workers’ sub-scale (AIC) is from 0.57 to 0.8, while the ‘communication channel with co-workers’ (CCC) sub-scale generated a range from 0.66 to 0.85, factor loading of each indicator is larger than twice of standard errors at the significant level $p < 0.01$. In addition, the factor loading of CRC, AIC and CCC on co-worker communication in the organisation (OCS) are 0.71, 0.84 and 0.92, which is higher than their respective two standard error ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, convergent validity exists in the second-order co-worker communication in the organisation construct.

Discriminant validity:

The pairwise comparison of CRC, AIC and CCC constructs are tested separately, and the results can be seen in Table 3-12. All chi-squares in unconstrained models are different from constrained models, and none of the confidence intervals (95%) around the estimated correlation between the pair of the scale includes 1.0. thus, it can be inferred that the three sub-scales in co-worker communication in organisation construct shows discriminant validity.

Table 3-12 Chi-square difference test between each pair of scales employing AMOS 18

Model	DF (res)	Chi-square		p-value (unc)	GFI (unc)	Lower bound	High bound
		(res)	(unc)				
CRC vs AIC	104	1292.767	1040.052	0.000	0.821	0.517	0.661
AIC vs CCC	27	630.427	422.180	0.000	0.890	0.695	0.833
CRC vs CCC	90	1280.895	1085.452	0.000	0.791	0.592	0.715

Note: “Res” stands for restrained model; “unc” stands for unconstrained model.

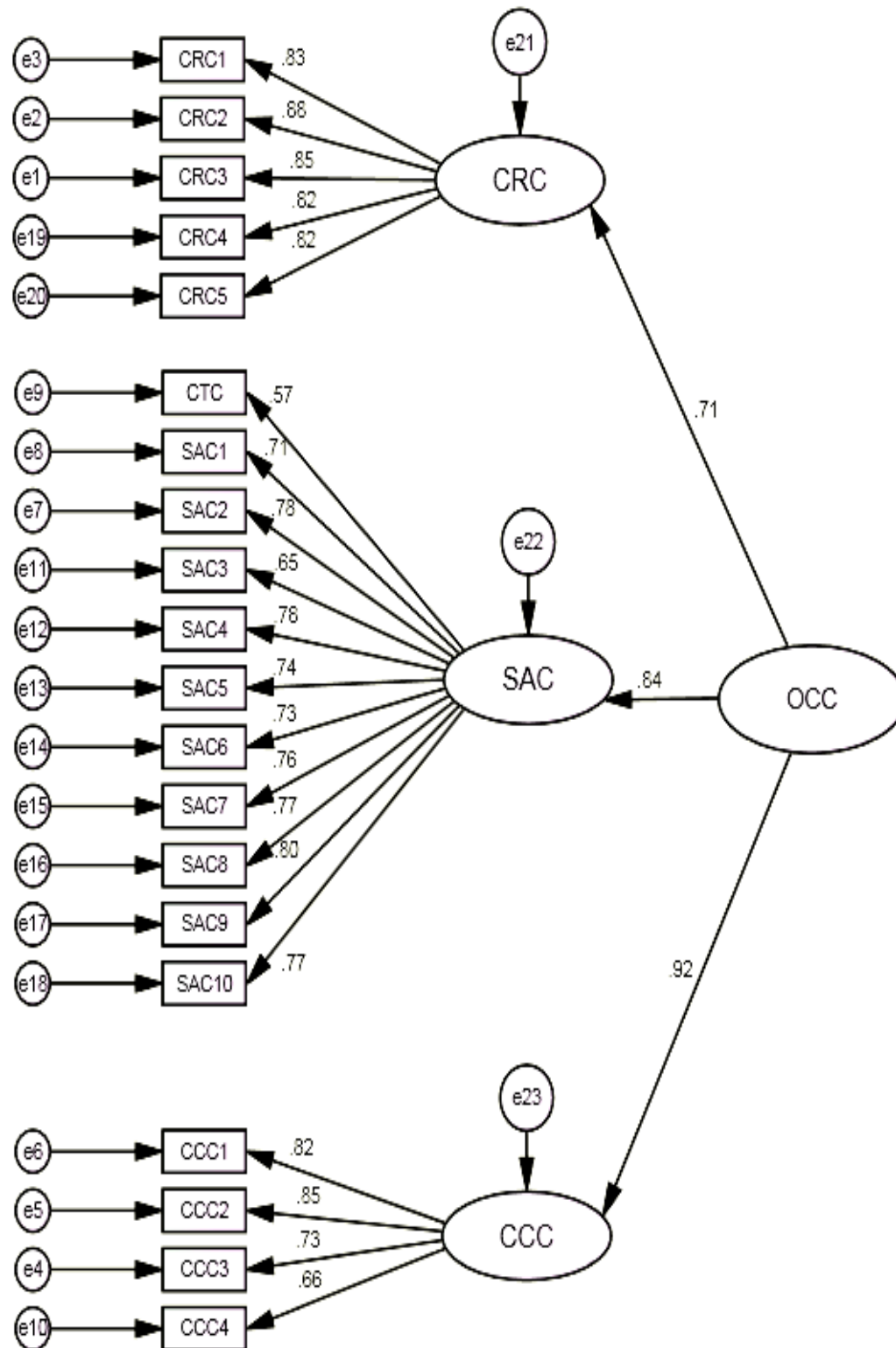


Figure 3-7 Model for co-worker communication

3.13.9 Assessing organisational commitment

The measurement model for organisational commitment was examined. Two sub-constructs were tested to examine if the data would fit the two factor structure of organisational commitment. 11 items in organisational commitment were entered into CFA. The results, which were displayed in Figure 3-8, show the factor loading of each measurement item as an indicator of the latent variables.

Convergent validity:

The factor loading of six items in affective commitment is from 0.79 to 0.85, all of which are greater than twice of their standard error, strongly supporting the convergent validity of the measurement items included in affective commitment. The factor loading of five items in normative commitment reached over 0.70 with only one exception of 0.67, strongly showing the adequacy of the five measurement items of normative commitment.

Discriminant validity:

The pairwise comparison tests of affective commitment and normative commitment constructs are reported in Table 3-13. As can be seen, the chi-square differences are clearly significant (significant drop in chi-square from the unconstrained to the constrained model), which indicates discriminant validity of the scales. In addition, the confidence interval of the estimated correlation between the pair of scales, obtained by using bootstrapping method in AMOS, does not include “one”. As a result, it concludes that affective commitment and normative commitment under the umbrella of organisational commitment are two distinct constructs.

Table 3-13 Chi-square difference test between affective commitment and normative commitment scales employing AMOS 18

Model	DF (res)	Chi-square		p-value (unc)	GFI (unc)	Lower bound	Higher bound
		(res)	(unc)				
AC vs NC	44	400.588	325.506	0.000	0.925	0.837	0.903

Note: “Res” stands for restrained model; “unc” stands for unconstrained model.

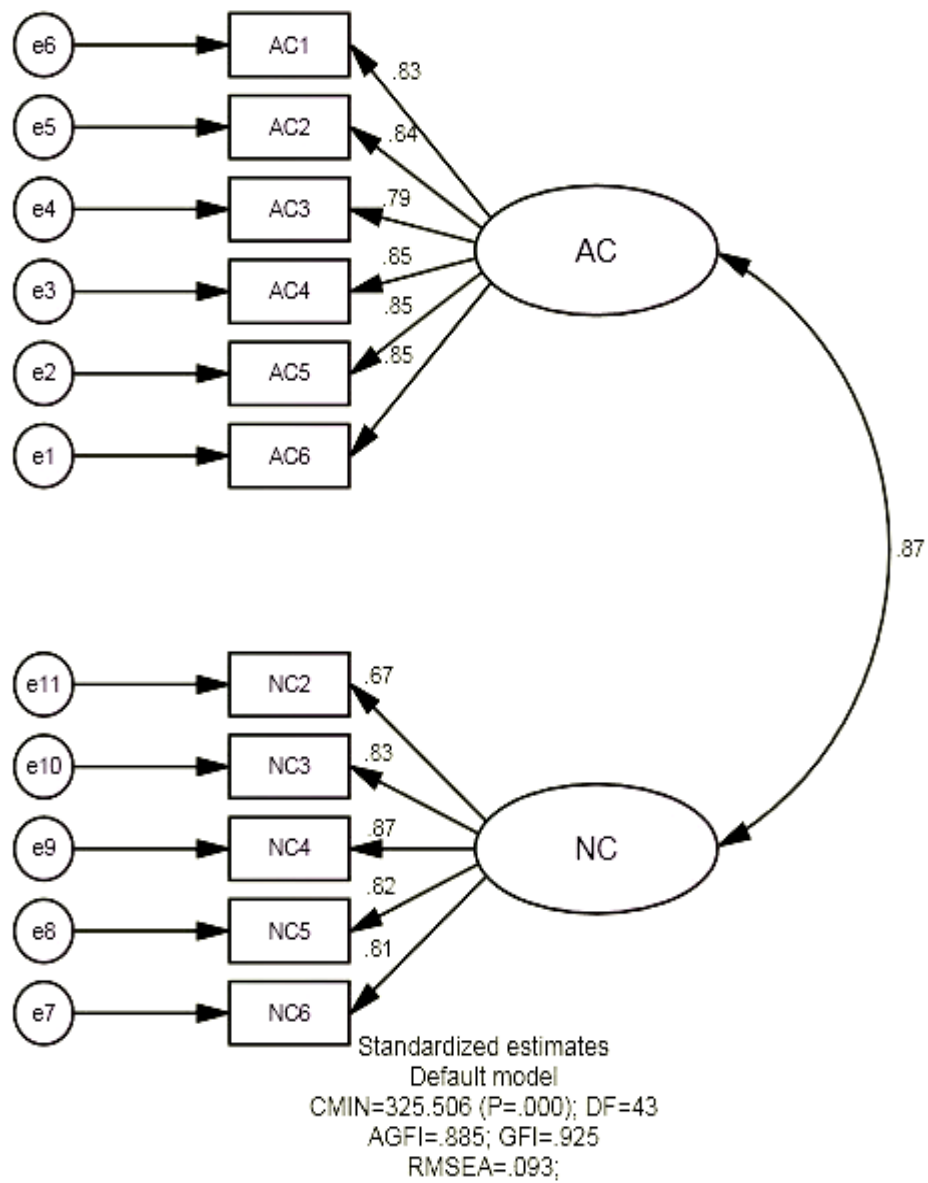


Figure 3-8 Model for organisational commitment

Table 3-14 below demonstrated the overall fit indices for the measurement models of the six scales in terms of chi-squared, df, CFI, GFI, RMR and RMSEA. According to the result of confirmatory factor analysis, these six scales are all well fitted. In the next session, the discriminant validity of hypothesised mediated models will be examined.

Table 3-14 Fit indices for the measurement models of the 6 scales

Model	Chi-Square	DF	CFI	GFI	RMR	RMSEA
supervisor communication	1387.993	186	0.894	0.805	0.044	0.092
co-worker communication	1581.423	167	0.869	0.780	0.064	0.106
Trust in supervisor	194.803	20	0.969	0.934	0.023	0.108
Trust in co-worker	227.453	20	0.954	0.926	0.024	0.117
Trust in organisation	204.229	20	0.961	0.939	0.025	0.110
Organisational commitment	325.506	44	0.958	0.925	0.031	0.093

3.13.10 Discriminant validity assessment of hypothesised mediated model 1

In the hypothesised mediated model 1 (Figure 3-9), there are four main constructs: supervisory communication in the organisation (OCS), trust in supervisor (TIS), trust in organisation (TIO) and organisational commitment (OCT). Table 3-15 shows the results of the pair-wise comparison of the four constructs. The chi-squared in the constrained model, in which the estimated correlation of the two constructs is fixed to 1, is higher than the one in the freely estimated correlation model, at the significance level of $P < 0.01$. Moreover, the value of 1 is not included within the computed confidence interval in any of the pair of constructs examined. These indices indicated that four constructs OCS, TIS, TIO and OCT in hypothesis mediated model 1 are statistically distinguishable from each other.

Table 3-15 Chi-square difference test between each pair of scales employing AMOS 18

Model	DF (res)	Chi-square		p-value (unc)	GFI (unc)	Lower bound	High bound
		(res)	(unc)				
OCS vs TIS	44	310.939	222.268	0.000	0.945	0.817	0.881
OCS vs TIO	44	426.393	290.950	0.000	0.935	0.813	0.886
OCS vs OCT	5	145.843	16.526	0.000	0.992	0.802	0.886
TIS vs TIO	104	760.560	663.748	0.000	0.898	0.791	0.863
TIS vs OCT	35	321.024	223.727	0.000	0.940	0.739	0.831
TIO vs OCT	35	398.127	281.225	0.000	0.933	0.895	0.953

Note: “Res” stands for restrained model; “unc” stands for unconstrained model.

This study also compared the theoretical model with alternative models. The results displayed in Table 3-16 further confirm that the 4 factors model has better fitness than the other models. Trust in supervisor and trust in organisation as two distinct constructs cannot be combined together. Figure 3-9 presented the final vertical model, which has four constructs in terms of supervisory communication, trust in supervisor, trust in organisation and organisational commitment. Organisational commitment is the dependant variable in relation to supervisory communication and trust.

Table 3-16 Measurement model of studied constructs

Model	Chi-square	DF	CFI	TLI	PCFI	RMSEA	P
1 factor	2407.239	189	0.855	0.838	0.769	0.125	<.01
2 factor	1378.438	188	0.922	0.913	0.825	0.092	<.01
3 factor(a)	1292.876	186	0.927	0.918	0.821	0.089	<.01
3 factor(b)	981.022	186	0.948	0.941	0.840	0.075	<.01
4 factor	508.726	183	0.954	0.947	0.931	0.072	<.01

Note: The 3 factor (a) model combines TIO with OCT. The 3-factor (b) model combines TIS with OCS. The 2 factor model combines TIO with OCT, and TIS with OCS. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI= Tucker-Lewis index; PCFI=parsimony comparative fit index; RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation

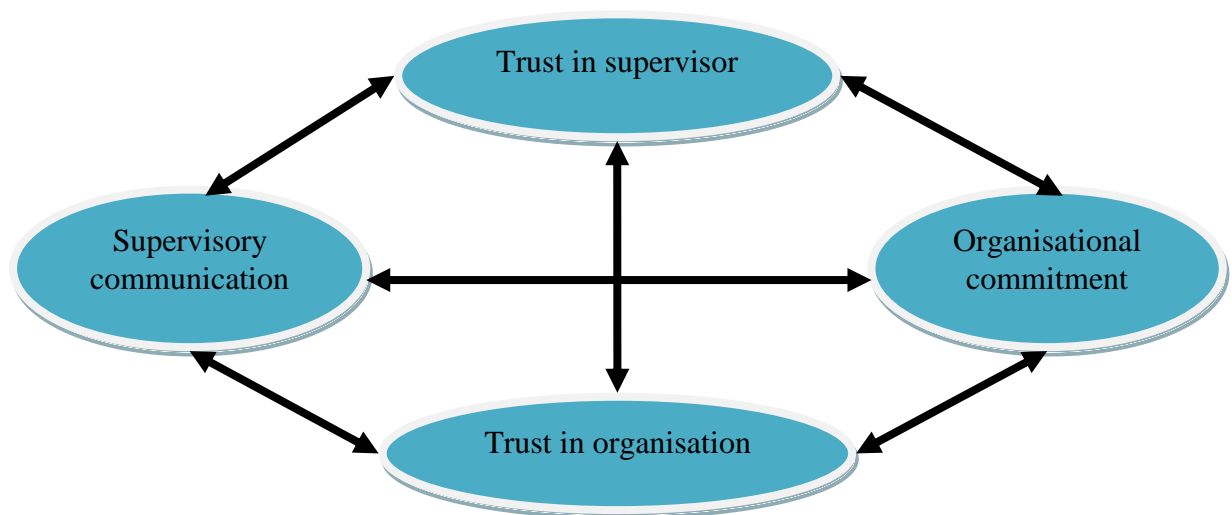


Figure 3-9 Hypothesised Model 1-Interaction with supervisor

Discriminant validity assessment of hypothesised mediated model 2

In the hypothesised mediated model 2 (Figure 3-10), there are four main constructs; co-worker communication in the organisation (OCC), trust in co-worker (TIC), trust in organisation (TIO) and organisational commitment (OCT). The results of the pair-wise comparison of the four constructs are shown in Table 3-17. The value of 1 is not included within the computed confidence interval in any of the pair of constructs examinations. Meanwhile the p-value in the unconstrained model is at the significance level ($p < 0.01$). These indices support the discriminant validity of the horizontal model.

Table 3-17 Chi-square difference test between each pair of scales employing AMOS 18

Model	DF (res)	Chi-square		p-value (unc)	GFI (unc)	Lower bound	Higher bound
		(res)	(unc)				
OCC vs TIC	44	562.600	355.825	0.000	0.915	0.857	0.929
OCC vs TIO	44	544.777	313.284	0.000	0.930	0.741	0.84
OCC vs OCT	5	286.276	41.569	0.000	0.978	0.732	0.848
TIC vs TIO	104	902.181	709.505	0.000	0.891	0.585	0.736
TIC vs OCT	35	517.315	303.131	0.000	0.918	0.563	0.709
TIO vs OCT	35	376.604	281.225	0.000	0.933	0.895	0.953

Note: “Res” stands for restrained model; “unc” stands for unconstrained model.

Table 3-18 Measurement model of studied constructs (N=757)

Model	Chi-square	DF	CFI	TLI	PCFI	RMSEA	P
1 factor	3650.164	189	0.748	0.720	0.673	0.156	<.01
2 factor	1423.544	188	0.0910	0.900	0.815	0.093	<.01
3 factor (a)	1214.107	186	0.925	0.916	0.819	0.086	<.01
3 factor (b)	1341.971	186	0.916	0.905	0.811	0.091	<.01
4 factor	1122.195	183	0.932	0.922	0.812	0.082	<.01

Note: The 3 factor (a) model combines TIO with OCT. The 3-factor (b) model combines TIC with OCC. The 2 factor model combines TIO with OCT, and TIC with OCC. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI= Tucker-Lewis index; PCFI=parsimony comparative fit index; RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation

Alternative models were compared with the horizontal model. The results of this are shown in Table 3-18, which further confirmed that the 4 factors model has better fitness than the other models. Although trust in organisation and organisational commitment reflect the employees' perceptions of the organisation, the two constructs could not be grouped together. Figure 3-10 presents the horizontal model, co-worker communication incorporated with trust in co-worker and trust in organisation impact on organisational commitment. The data in table 3-16 further supports the notion that the 4 factors model has better fitness than the other models.

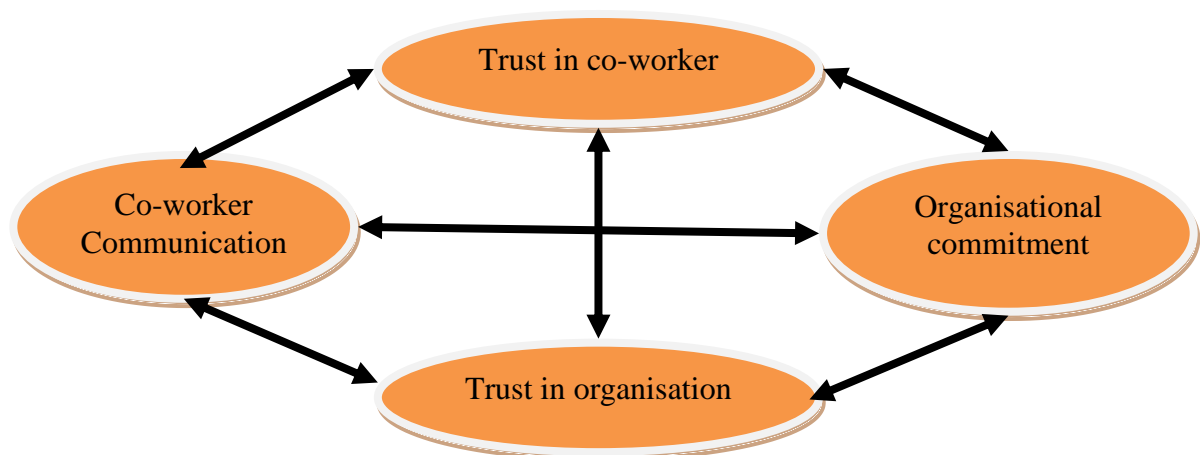


Figure 3-10 Hypothesised mediated model 2- interaction with co-worker

3.14 Data analysis

In order to answer the first research question, both descriptive and correlation statistics were employed to test the interrelationship of the constructs in the hypothesised model. To test the hypotheses and the mediating role of trust in the workplace embedded in the second research question, structural equation modelling (SEM) was performed. SEM allows for the specification and simultaneous estimation of relationships between multiple observed and latent variables and allows alternative models to be compared to a theoretically derived model in determining the fit of the data to the model (Long 1983). The proposed models were tested by performing SEM with the maximum likelihood estimation method using AMOS 18.

Using the two-step method (Anderson and Gerbing 1988), the measurement and structure models were examined in separate steps. The measurement model tests using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) have already been reported in this chapter. The second step, structural modelling, specifies hypothesised relationships between latent constructs and is discussed in the next chapter.

Alternative structural models were evaluated and compared with the hypothesized model. After comparing both model-data fit and harmony between hypothesised and alternative models, the significance of the individual paths in the best fitting model was assessed to determine the strength of the hypothesized relationships between the constructs, and the best fitting model was selected.

3.15 Summary

This chapter served to document the research design and methodology adopted for empirical research. The methods of data collection and analysis employed to investigate the hypotheses and meet the research aims and objectives were explained. The analysis methods and statistics programmes were introduced.

This chapter has also discussed the reliability and construct validity of the instrument for the pilot study and main study. After conducting reliability tests, due to low reliability, six items were eliminated from the 82 items leaving 76 items. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) technique, performed with the AMOS 18 programme, was used to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs. All factor loading of each indicator was above 0.45 and greater than twice its individual standard errors, which suggests that all the items showed convergent validity to the proposed underlying construct. Additionally, discriminant validity was supported. The six constructs were distinguished from each other. The significant difference of chi-squared in the constrained and unconstrained models, within the pair of sub-scale constructs, indicates the discrimination between sub-dimensions in three second-order constructs including supervisory communication in the organisation (OCS), co-worker communication in the organisation (OCC) and organisational commitment (OCT).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis of this study. To address the research questions listed in chapter 1, several statistical techniques were utilized, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Two statistical software packages including Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) 18 and Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 18 were used to conduct the statistical analysis.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 1300 questionnaires were distributed to 3 state-owned enterprises (SOE) and 2 joint-venture enterprises (JVE) in the city of Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu province in China. 812 completed questionnaires were returned, a 62.5% response rate. However, some of the questionnaires had not been fully completed, for example where one or two questions had not been answered meaning these responses could not be included. The number of questionnaires that qualified as appropriate for data analysis was 757 reducing the response rate to 58%. Table 4-1 shows the response rate of each of the five companies, and Figure 4-1 displays the proportion of usable responses from employees at each of the five companies included in the final analysis.

Table 4-1 Response rate for each company, and percentage response for the main study

Company name	Send (copies)	Received (copies)	Non-defective responses (copies)	Initial response rate (%)	Non-defective response rate (%)
SOE 1	400	302	272	75.5%	68%
SOE 2	200	115	112	57.5%	56%
SOE 3	200	114	108	57%	54%
JVE 1	200	125	118	62.5%	59%
JVE 2	300	156	147	52%	49%
Total	1300	812	757	62.5%	58%

Figure 4-1 shows the proportion of responses taken from each of the five enterprises. SOEs produced 65% of the non-defective questionnaires, while the proportion for JVEs was 35%. Of the total, 36% of respondents were from SOE1, which has 1200 employees. Due to the support and co-operation of the human resource manager at this enterprise, approximately one quarter of the employees in SOE1 participated in this research, and 68% of the employees completed in full and returned their questionnaire to the researcher.

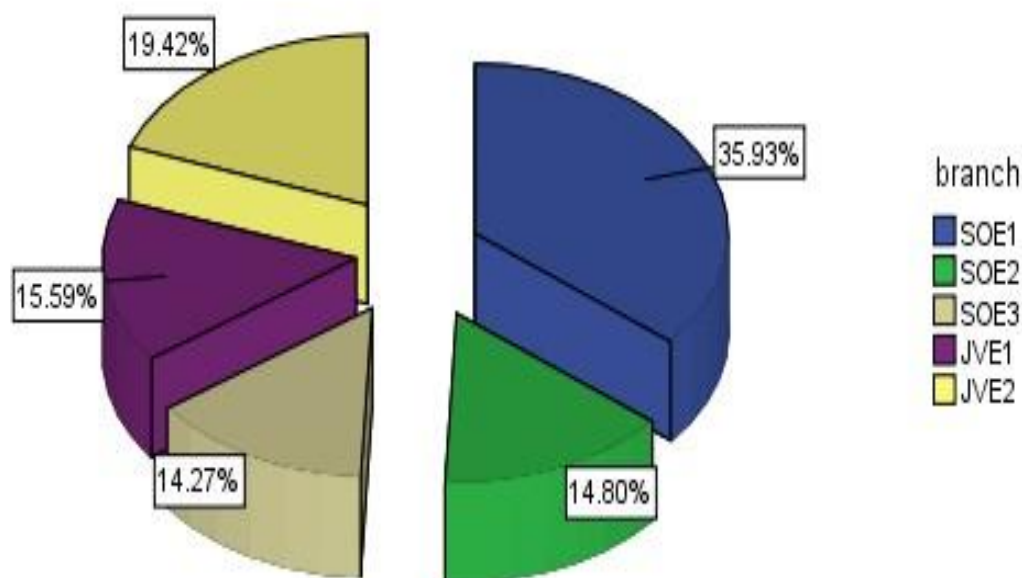


Figure 4-1 Proportion of usable responses from each company

4.1.1 Demographic statistics

A diverse group of 757 respondents from five Chinese enterprises participated in this study. All the five enterprises are in the petrochemical industry, which is mainly controlled and dominated by Chinese government. With great support from government, these five organisations are well developed and make considerable profits every year. Most employees who are older than 40 have worked in the organisation since it opened. They assist companies to coach new employees with a broad base of knowledge gained from many years' experience in their work. Due to

their great contributions, some of them have been promoted to manage level. Nowadays, the companies become more productive and effective; attracting more and more well-educated young generation joined the company. They exert to bring new energy and creative ideas to their work, as a result, new approaches and methods were massively applied in the company. On the other hand, companies provide old employees with well-organised training course or master course in the university, in which they could update their knowledge and also get the chances to exchange the experiences with experts in the same area. Thus, the education level of employees improved rapidly and one third of the respondents have university or above degree.

Of the diverse group of 757 respondents, 265 were working in JVEs whereas 492 were SOE employees. In the questionnaire, the respondents were requested to provide their demographic characteristics including gender, age, level of education, tenure and their management level in the organisation. Table 4-2 summarises the demographic characteristics of the final 757 participants. The highest proportion of respondents had over 10 years work experience and around 50% of participants are aged from 40-49. Most of them got high school diploma or three years college degree. The gender of the respondents is quite balanced, while 53.6% are male and 46.4% are female.

Table 4-2 Summary of the demographic characteristics of participants

DC	Category	Frequency						Percent %
		S1	S2	S3	J1	J2	Total	
Gender	Male	95	72	70	86	83	406	53.6
	Female	177	40	38	32	64	351	46.40
Age	Under 29	8	9	25	38	43	123	16.2
	29 to 39	75	28	33	35	65	236	31.2
	40 to 49	186	70	39	36	33	364	48.1
	Over 50	3	5	11	9	6	34	4.5
Education	High school	183	48	20	32	40	323	42.7
	Three-year college	52	45	34	50	41	222	29.3
	Four-year college	31	18	47	31	60	187	24.7
	Masters and above	6	1	7	5	6	25	3.3
Working experience	1 to 3 years	6	8	9	29	45	97	12.8
	3 to 5 years	4	5	14	16	36	75	9.9
	5 to 7years	7	1	9	16	27	60	7.9
	7 to 10 years	9	12	16	13	14	64	8.5
	Over 10 years	24	8	6	4	2	461	60.9
Management level	Normal day shift workers	115	29	43	38	64	289	38.2
	Normal night shift workers	100	38	6	41	14	199	26.3
	Junior management	42	42	52	26	58	220	29.1
	Medium management	13	2	6	13	9	43	5.7
	Top management	2	1	1	0	2	6	0.8
	Total	272	112	108	118	147	757	100

- Gender

Of the sample population, 406 (54%) were male and 351 (46%) were female. Figure 4-2 shows the number of male and female employees in each of the five enterprises. Except for SOE 1, all enterprises have a higher male than female response rate. This could be explained by the fact that the working environment can not be acceptable by the female than the male employees. The facility is quite noisy and because of technology issue, the emission is not very healthy for long time work. Female workers prefer to work in a pleasant office more than a noisy and unhealthy work site.

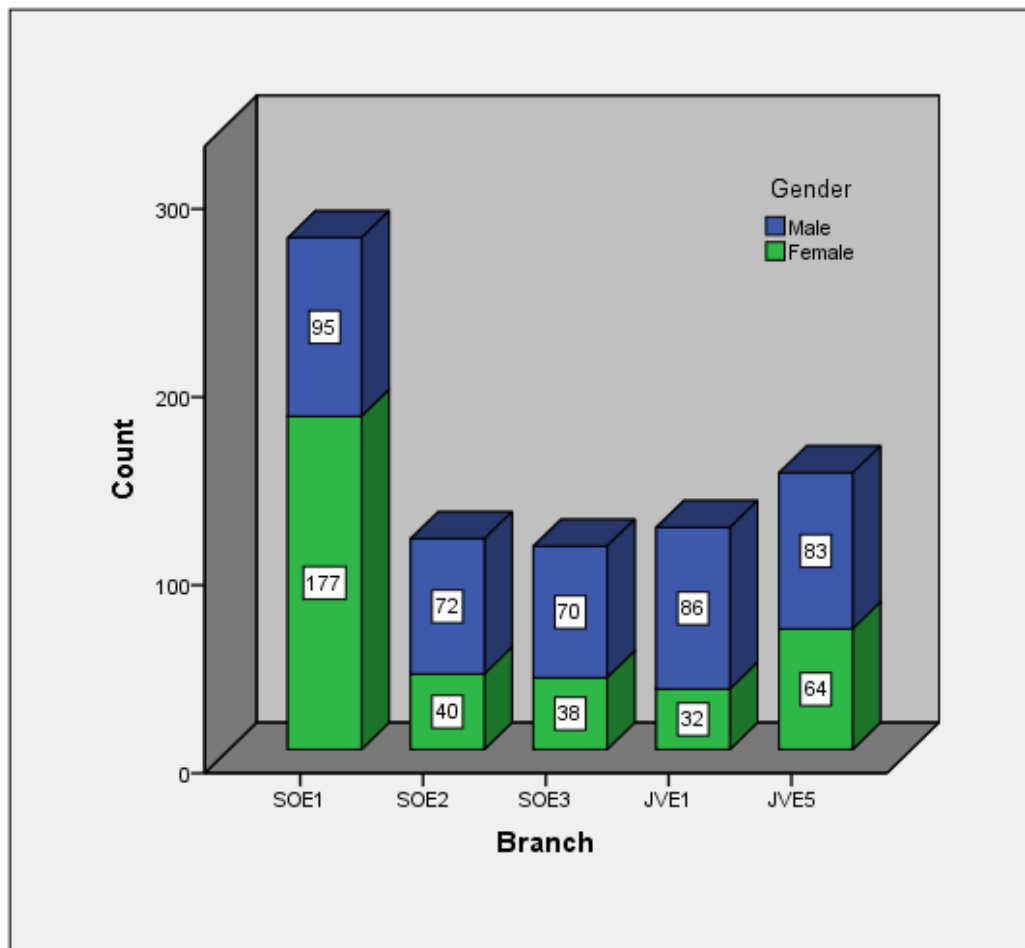


Figure 4-2 Gender of respondents

Age:

Figure 4-3 shows that 16% of the respondents were under 29 years old. The age group 40 to 49 years accounts for the largest proportion of the population (48%). Only 4% of the employees are over 50 years old, which may be due to the companies' retirement policies whereby any employee over the age of 50 is entitled to apply for early retirement.

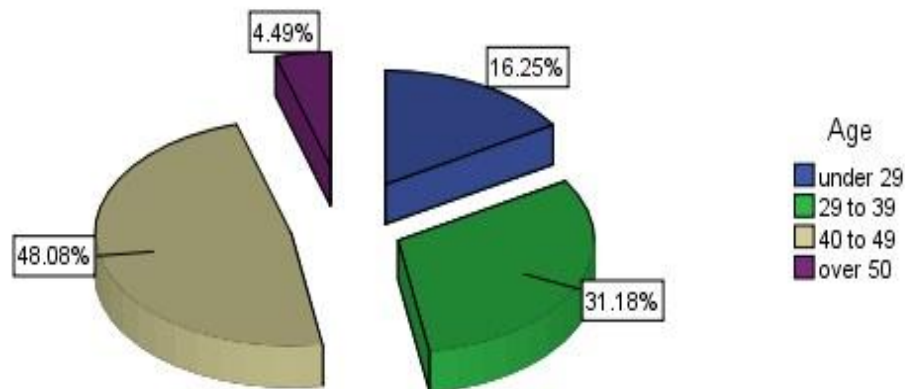


Figure 4-3 Age of respondents

- Education

Figure 4-4 shows that employees with a high school diploma account for the largest proportion (43%) of respondents. 24.7% of respondents have achieved a four-year higher education at university, and only 3.3% of employees have obtained a masters or doctoral degree.

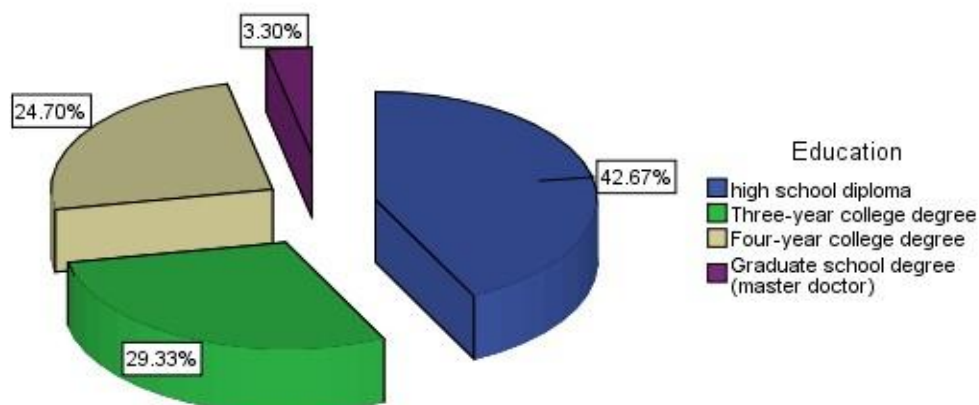


Figure 4-4 Education level of respondents

- Management level (ML)

According to information provided by the human resource managers at these five companies, employees generally work two shifts including night and day shifts. 65.47% of the total respondents are normal workers, who are not in management position. Nearly one third (29.06%) of participants indicated that they hold a junior management position, while 5.68% are medium managers and 0.79% are top managers. The proportion of respondents at each management level is shown in Figure 4-5 below.

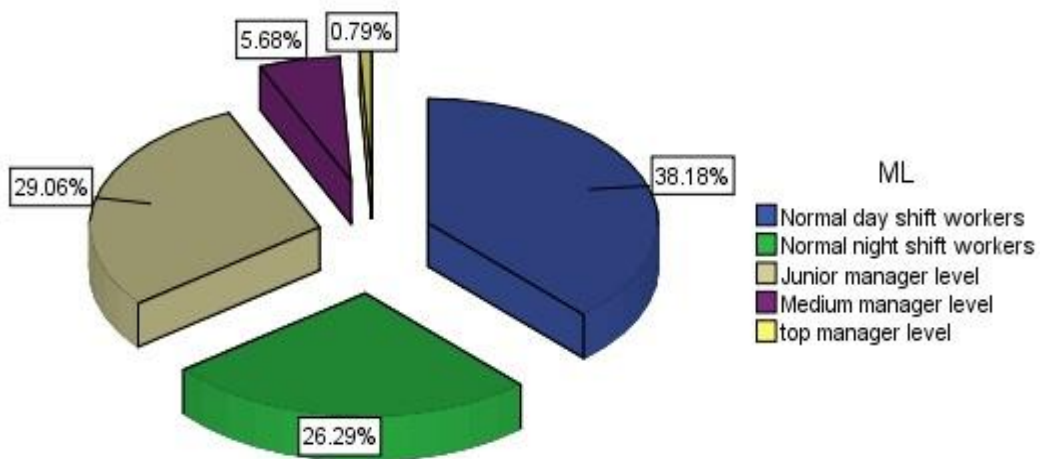


Figure 4-5 Proportion of respondents at each management level

- Number of years of experience

The questionnaires elicited information regarding the number of years of experience which the employees had, and so respondents were grouped into the following categories; 1 to 3 years, 3 to 5 years, 5 to 7 years, 7 to 10 years, and over 10 years of experience (Figure 4-6). The largest proportion (61%) of respondents have worked in their company for more than 10 years and are therefore likely to be familiar with the concepts of organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment within their company.

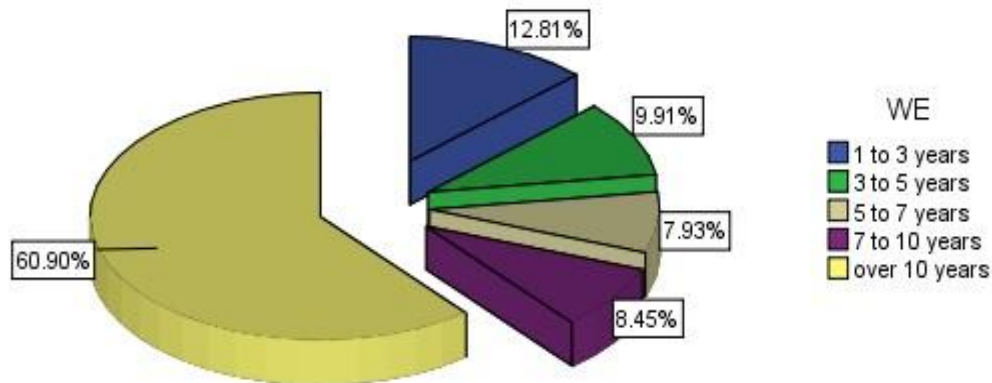


Figure 4-6 Number of years respondents have worked in their company

Note: WE=working experience

This background information regarding the respondents supports the underlying assumption that respondents are competent, experienced and capable of exercising sound judgement. As such, responses provided by them could be relied upon for this study.

4.1.2 Descriptive statistics

In the following section, individual and overall means and standard deviations calculated from subscales and items in the six constructs including supervisory communication, co-worker communication, trust in co-workers, trust in supervisor, trust in organisation and organisational commitment will be presented. Table 4-3 below presents the results of statistical tests on the six scales which have been considered by the research. This section will then go on to reveal the results for each of the scales one at a time.

Table 4-3 Descriptive statistics on scales and sub-scales in supervisory communication in the organisation, co-worker communication in the organisation, trust in supervisor, trust in co-worker, trust in organisation and organisational commitment (n=757)

Construct	Number of items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Supervisory communication (OCS)	21	3.2804	0.68115
Communication relationship with supervisor (CRS)	3	3.2598	0.91304
Adequacy of information from supervisor (AIS)	14	3.2889	0.66754
Communication channel with supervisor (CCS)	4	3.2662	0.86869
2. Co-worker communication (OCC)	20	3.4371	0.60870
Communication relationship with co-worker (CRC)	5	3.7099	0.78253
Adequacy of information from co-workers (AIC)	11	3.3142	0.63746
Communication channel with co-workers (CCC)	4	3.4343	0.75597
3. Trust in supervisor (TIS)	8	3.4249	0.81866
4. Trust in co-worker (TIC)	8	3.5518	0.68814
5. Trust in organisation (TIO)	8	3.3129	0.77722
6. Organisational commitment (OCT)	11	3.2653	0.77232
Affective commitment (AC)	5	3.3459	0.81318
Normative commitment (NC)	6	3.1686	0.82174

As shown in Table 4-3, for the six main constructs, trust in co-worker has the highest mean score, and organisational commitment has the lowest mean score. At the subscale level, questionnaire respondents gave the highest mean score to communication relationship with co-workers, and the lowest mean score to normative commitment. The standard deviation of the six scales and 8 sub-scales are all above 0.6, ranging from 0.63746 to 0.91304.

Table 4-4 Descriptive statistics for items in the scale ‘supervisory communication in the organisation’

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentage			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
	Communication Relationship					
CRS1	My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward work and life	19	36.6	44.4	3.31	1.008
CRS2	I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor	16.9	35.9	47.2	3.39	1.008
CRS3	After office hours, I have social activities together with my supervisor, such as having dinner together or having entertainment together, which go beyond work duties	27.9	35.7	36.4	3.08	1.119
	Adequacy of Information					
CTS	What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your supervisor ?	15.9	32.6	51.5	3.46	.973
SAS1	How well I am doing my job	12	31.3	56.7	3.52	.874
SAS2	My job duties	10.2	31.4	58.4	3.56	.838
SAS3	Organisational policies	15.1	41	43.9	3.34	.875
SAS4	Pay and benefits	30.5	40.6	28.9	2.93	.989
SAS5	How technological changes affect my jobs	14	44.3	41.7	3.31	.844
SAS6	Mistakes and failures of my organisation	17.3	53.1	29.6	3.14	.853
SAS7	How I am being judged	12.9	37.3	49.8	3.42	.861
SAS8	How my job-related problems are being handled	11.9	39.6	48.5	3.41	.843
SAS9	How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	14.1	50.1	35.8	3.25	.843
SAS10	Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	26.9	41.7	31.4	3.03	.967

Item	Statement	Percentages			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
SAS11	Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	15.9	46.8	37.3	3.24	.865
SAS12	How my job relates to the total operation of my organisation	14.7	47.6	37.7	3.25	.857
SAS13	Specific problems faced by management	17	50.5	32.5	3.17	.900
	Communication Channel					
CCS1	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	18.6	32.6	48.8	3.36	.991
CCS2	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	18.1	37.5	44.4	3.32	.965
CCS3	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	22.6	40.2	37.2	3.17	1.002
CCS4	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	23.4	35.8	40.8	3.21	1.050

Table 4-4 shows that item SAS2 (response to the question ‘how satisfied I am with the amount of the information I get about my job duties’) had the highest score (the mean is 3.56) with the lowest standard deviation of 0.838. Item SAS4 (response to the question ‘how satisfied I am with the amount of the information I get about pay and benefits’) had the lowest score (the mean is 2.93), the only score below 3. The information revealed that participant employees were most dissatisfied with the information provided by their supervisors about pay and benefits. This is understandable, because none of the employees had access to knowledge about the pay and benefit except for their own salaries and insurance. The human resource department prepares the payment and bonus for each employee and transfer the salary directly to their individual bank account at the end of month. All the information related to salary is confidential. The ambiguous salary structure and hidden

information impact on employees' perception towards the system, the suspicious that the supervisor provides the bonus based on their personal favour was raised among employees. The results showed that employees are preferred to be told by their supervisor directly about the salary more than discussing and sharing with their colleagues.

Table 4-5 Descriptive statistics for items in the scale 'co-worker communication'

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentages			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
	Communication Relationship					
CRC1	My colleagues helped me solving work related problems.	9.9	23.2	66.9	3.74	.937
CRC2	My colleagues kindly reminded me when he/she found the mistakes I made in my work.	8.9	21.3	69.8	3.77	.892
CRC3	My colleagues encouraged my work.	8.3	33.8	57.9	3.62	.882
CRC4	My colleagues cooperated well with me at work.	7.4	30.8	61.8	3.70	.868
CRC5	My colleagues communicated with me frankly at work.	8.5	26.7	64.8	3.72	.905
	Adequacy of Information					
CTC	What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your co-workers ?	10.6	36.5	52.9	3.52	.866
SAC1	My job duties	9.2	37.6	53.2	3.52	.812
SAC2	Organisational policies	11.1	44.9	44	3.38	.807
SAC3	Pay and benefits	25.9	39.9	34.2	3.08	.974
SAC4	How technological changes affect my jobs	13.7	46.4	39.9	3.31	.838
SAC5	Mistakes and failures of my organisation	15.2	54.6	30.2	3.18	.811
SAC6	How my job-related problems are being handled	10.6	42.1	47.3	3.42	.818
SAC7	How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	10.8	44.3	44.9	3.39	.795
SAC8	Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	19	45.7	35.3	3.19	.877

Item	Statement	Percentage			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
SAC9	Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	14.1	48.9	37	3.27	.826
SAC10	Specific problems faced by management	14.8	52.6	32.6	3.21	.830
	Communication Channel					
CCC1	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your co-worker	10	31.4	58.6	3.61	.891
CCC2	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through telephone communication with your co-worker	10	32.2	57.8	3.58	.847
CCC3	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your co-worker	18.2	42.7	39.1	3.27	.921
CCC4	To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your co-worker	19.7	39.1	41.2	3.28	.983

Table 4-5 shows that item CRC2 (response to the question ‘my colleagues kindly tell me when they find mistakes in my work’) had the highest score (the mean is 3.77). Item SAC3 (‘how satisfied I am with the amount of information I receive about pay and benefits’) had the lowest score (the mean is 3.08). The information revealed that participant employees were less satisfied with the information provided by their co-workers about pay and benefits, a similar response to that given for the concept of supervisory communication.

Table 4-6 Descriptive statistics for items in the scale ‘organisational commitment’

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentage			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
	Affective Commitment					
AC1	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	19	37.3	43.7	3.27	.975
AC2	I feel like part of the family at my organisation.	18.5	34.1	47.4	3.32	.964
AC3	I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own.	13.7	37.8	48.5	3.42	.916
AC4	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation	14.4	36.9	48.7	3.39	.916
AC5	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	15.7	38.3	46	3.35	.935
AC6	I feel “emotionally attached” to this organisation	16.9	39.4	43.7	3.32	.932
	Normative Commitment					
NC2	I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	34.9	36.5	28.6	2.89	1.075
NC3	I feel obligation to remain with my current employer	20.6	42.5	36.9	3.18	.961
NC4	This organisation deserves my loyalty.	18.6	43.5	37.9	3.21	.937
NC5	I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	15.1	39	45.9	3.37	.927
NC6	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	19.8	43.6	36.6	3.19	.970

The mean and standard deviation (SD) of items in the scale of ‘organisational communication’ are shown in Table 4-6. Responses to NC2 (‘I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now’) gave the lowest score (2.89), meaning that most participant employees do not feel much obligation to their employers. AC3 (I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own) in affective commitment had the highest score of 3.42 and a SD of 0.916, which may indicate that employees have a positive feeling of responsibility for dealing with the organisation’s problems.

Table 4-7 Descriptive statistics for items in the scale ‘trust in supervisor’ scale

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentages			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
TIS1	I feel that my manager at the company listen to what I have to say	15.2	34.7	50.1	3.42	1.000
TIS2	I act on the basis that my manager display integrity in his/her actions	11.6	30.4	58	3.57	.938
TIS3	I think that my manager appreciates and reward when I perform well	12.5	36.9	50.6	3.45	.924
TIS4	I feel comfortable to work with my manager	14.1	39.9	46	3.37	.938
TIS5	I believe that my supervisor follows through promises with action	14.3	40.7	45	3.36	.931
TIS6	I feel that my manager is available when needed	14.8	40.7	44.5	3.34	.934
TIS7	I believe that my manager keeps personal discussion confidential	13.5	37.6	48.9	3.40	.924
TIS8	I feel that my manager trusts his/her employees to work without excessive supervision	11.8	35	53.2	3.49	.948

As shown by Table 4-7, all items scored relatively evenly, ranging from 3.37 (TIS4) to 3.57 (TIS2), which may imply that most participants are willing to trust their supervisors. However, the lowest scoring item was TIS4 (‘I feel comfortable working with my manager’), meaning that some of the managers may not have successfully established relaxed working relationships with their subordinates, and consequently, employees feel nervous working with their immediate supervisors.

Table 4-8 Descriptive statistics for items in the scale ‘trust in co-worker’

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentages			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
TIC1	I feel that I can trust my co-workers to do their jobs well	8.9	27.3	63.8	3.65	.830
TIC2	I proceed with the knowledge that my co-workers are considerate of my interests	10.7	37.1	52.2	3.49	.840
TIC3	I believe that my co-workers support me if I have problems	7.4	31.3	61.3	3.63	.804
TIC4	I feel confident that my co-workers appreciate my good work	8.1	33.9	58	3.59	.798
TIC5	I feel that co-workers are truthful in their dealings with me	7.9	33.6	58.5	3.61	.807
TIC6	I think that my co-workers act reliably from one moment to the next	10.2	39.6	50.2	3.48	.822
TIC7	I will act on the foundation that my co-workers display ethical behaviour	9.1	33	57.9	3.58	.829
TIC8	I behave on the basis that my co-workers will not disclose personal information	13.6	39.8	46.6	3.40	.893

Table 4-8 demonstrates that TIC1 (I feel that I can trust my co-workers to do their jobs well) has a larger mean (3.65) than other elements of the trust in co-worker category, while TIC8 (I behave on the basis that my co-workers will not disclose personal information) had the lowest score of 3.40. These results indicate that employees’ trust in co-workers is mainly influenced by the ability instead of integrity or characters of the colleagues.

Table 4-9 Descriptive statistics for items in the ‘trust in organisation’ scale

(1&2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4&5=Agree; n=757)

Item	Statement	Percentages			Mean	S.D.
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
TIO1	I have positive feelings about the future direction of the company	12.9	35.4	51.7	3.46	.942
TIO2	I honestly express my opinion at the company with the knowledge that employee views are valued	18.9	37.5	43.6	3.29	.940
TIO3	I think that the company offers a supportive environment	18.5	41.5	40	3.26	.928
TIO4	I believe that the company recognises and rewards employees’ skills and abilities	17.4	39.7	42.9	3.29	.914
TIO5	It is generally accepted that the company take care of employee interests	23.6	42.1	34.3	3.13	.972
TIO6	I perform knowing that the company will recognize my work	14.1	37.7	48.2	3.40	.901
TIO7	I think that processes within the company are fair	16.6	41.8	41.6	3.27	.893
TIO8	I act on the basis that the company follows plans with actions	13.5	39.9	46.6	3.39	.878

As Table 4-9 above shows, the score of the mean for all responses in the trust in organisation scale is above 3, ranging between 3.13 and 3.46. TIO1 (I have positive feelings about the future direction of the company) has the highest mean score (3.46), which may imply that participant employees have a positive attitude towards the future development of the company. On the other hand, TIO5 (It is generally accepted that the company take care of employee interests) scored the lowest (3.13), suggesting that employees do not have a strong belief that their company puts the interests and personal benefits of employees first.

4.2 Testing the hypotheses

This section addresses the hypotheses which were outlined in section xxxx to examine the relationship between the concepts of supervisory communication (OCS), co-worker communication (OCC), trust in supervisor (TIS), trust in co-worker (TIC), trust in organisation (TIO) and organisational commitment (OCT). Both correlation analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) techniques were used to explore the internal relationships between these constructs. SEM tests were run using AMOS 18 to assess the fitness of the hypothesised mediated models. The results demonstrating correlations and the structural model of relationships will be presented and discussed in the next section.

4.2.1 Correlations between constructs

The Pearson product-moment method was used in this study to test the correlation between the constructs mentioned above. Pearson's (r) coefficient was used to test the strength of the relationship which is indicated by a value between zero and one. The closer the value of r is to one, the stronger the relationship is whereas the closer the value is to zero, the weaker the relationship is. The coefficient could either be negative or positive, indicating the direction of the relationship. If both factors increase and decrease together, the relationship is positive. If one factor increases as the other decreases, then the relationship is negative. The value of the Pearson's coefficient (r) can predict the effect size of the correlation between two constructs. The higher the coefficient is, the stronger the relationship is, and vice versa. According to Cohen's (1988) power tables, the magnitudes of the observed relationships were low, medium and large respectively. The values between 0.1 and 0.3 are referred to as small relationships, between 0.3 and 0.5 as medium relationship, and above 0.5 as large effect relationship. Table 4-10 below shows the correlation matrix of the six constructs being studied.

Table 4-10 Correlations between the scales of ‘supervisory communication’, ‘trust in supervisor’, ‘trust in organisation’ and ‘organisational commitment’ (n=757)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
1. Supervisory communication						
2. Co-worker communication	0.772**					
3. Trust in supervisor	0.781**	0.638**				
4. Trust in co-worker	0.591**	0.794**	0.613**			
5. Trust in organisation	0.787**	0.701**	0.788**	0.628**		
6. Organisational commitment	0.754**	0.678**	0.729**	0.588**	0.848**	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4-11 below presents the correlation matrix of all dimensions of supervisory communication, co-worker communication and organisational commitment.

Table 4-11 Correlations between the subscales of ‘co-worker communication’, ‘trust in co-worker’, ‘trust in organisation’ and ‘organisational commitment’ (n=757).

<i>Construct</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
1. CRS								
2. AIS	0.695**							
3. CCS	0.660**	0.762**						
4. CRC	0.427**	0.448**	0.321**					
5. AIC	0.605**	0.804**	0.662**	0.572**				
6. CCC	0.506**	0.614**	0.679**	0.553**	0.710**			
7. AC	0.561**	0.717**	0.671**	0.424**	0.693**	0.606**		
8. NC	0.497**	0.671**	0.609**	0.319**	0.626**	0.501**	0.785**	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: CRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; CRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment

4.2.2 Hypotheses testing

The next section will discuss the implications the results of these correlations have on the hypotheses proposed in this research.

Hypothesis 1: organisational communication is positively correlated with trust.

Table 4-11 presents the correlation matrix of all dimensions of supervisory communication, co-worker communication and organisational commitment. The research found that all correlations between the different subscales are significant ($p < 0.01$).

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between organisational communication and trust. The score of supervisory communication was calculated by the average scores of 21 of the items; while co-worker communication was calculated by the average scores of 20 of the items. The score of trust in supervisor and trust in co-worker were represented by their individual average value of measured items.

Hypothesis 1a: Supervisory communication is positively correlated with trust in supervisor.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) of supervisory communication and trust in supervisor is 0.781 ($p < 0.01$), Cohen's (1988) power tables suggest that the magnitude of the relationship between supervisory communication and trust in supervisor was large ($r > 0.5$). Hypothesis 1a has therefore been supported by the results of the data.

Hypothesis 1b: Co-worker communication is positively correlated with trust in co-worker.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) of supervisory communication and trust in supervisor is 0.794 ($p < 0.01$), the magnitude of the

observed relationship was large ($r=0.794$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, the statistics show that the data supports hypothesis 1b.

Hypothesis 1c: Supervisory communication is positively correlated with trust in organisation.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) of supervisory communication and trust in supervisor is 0.787 ($p<0.01$), and the magnitude of the observed relationship was large ($r=0.787$, $p<0.01$). The data therefore supports hypothesis 1c.

Hypothesis 1d: Co-worker communication is positively correlated with trust in organisation.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) of supervisory communication and trust in supervisor is 0.701 ($p<0.01$), and the magnitude of the observed relationship was large ($r=0.701$, $p<0.01$). This therefore means that the results support hypothesis 1d.

Hypothesis 2: Trust in individuals is positively associated with trust in organisation.

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between trust in colleagues and trust in the organisation. Trust in the organisation was calculated by considering the average value of 8 measured items.

Hypothesis 2a: Trust in supervisor is positively associated with trust in the organisation.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) of trust in supervisor and trust in the organisation is 0.788 ($p<0.01$), and the magnitude of the observed relationship was therefore large. Hypothesis 2a is supported by this result.

Hypothesis 2b: Trust in co-workers is positively associated with trust in organisation.

The results shown in table 4-10 strongly support the notion that there is a large significant relationship between the elements of trust in co-worker and trust in organisation ($p=0.628$, $p<0.01$). Thus hypothesis 2b is supported by the findings of the data.

Hypothesis 3: Trust is positively related to organisational commitment.

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between trust in the workplace and organisational commitment. The overall score of organisational commitment is calculated by the average value of its 11 composite measured items.

Hypothesis 3a: Trust in supervisor is positively related to organisational commitment.

The results show that there is a statistically significant, positive relationship between the elements of trust in supervisor and organisational commitment ($r=0.729$, $P<0.01$). The results found that as the scores for trust in supervisor increase, so do the scores for organisational commitment.

Hypothesis 3b: Trust in co-worker is positively related to organisational commitment.

The results in Table 4-10 show that the relationship between trust in co-worker and organisational commitment is significant and positive, and the magnitude of the observed relationship is large ($r=0.588$, $P<0.01$).

Hypothesis 3c: Trust in organisation is positively related to organisational commitment.

The results supported a statistically significant, positive relationship between trust in supervisor and organisational commitment ($r=0.848$, $P<0.01$). Therefore, as the scores for trust in supervisor increased, so did the scores for organisational commitment. In comparison with trust in co-worker, trust in supervisor demonstrated the highest correlation with organisational commitment ($0.848>0.729>0.588$).

Hypothesis 4: This study proposed that organisational communication is related to organisational commitment.

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment, the results of which are displayed in Table 4-10.

Hypothesis 4a: Supervisory communication is related to organisational commitment.

The results in Table 4-10 show that the relationship between supervisory communication and organisational commitment is significant and positive, and that the magnitude of the observed relationship was large ($r=0.754$, $P<0.01$). Thus hypothesis 4a was supported.

Hypothesis 4b: Co-worker communication is related to organisational commitment.

The results support a statistically significant, positive relationship between co-worker communication and organisational commitment ($r=0.678$, $P<0.01$). Therefore, as co-worker communication scores increased, so did the scores for organisational commitment. Hypothesis 4b is supported by the data.

All the hypotheses 1-4 were supported by the findings. Organisational communication and trust are positively related to organisational commitment. At the vertical level,

supervisory communication is positively associated with trust in supervisor. At the horizontal level, co-worker communication is positively related to trust in co-worker. Both trust in supervisor and trust in co-worker are positively connected to trust in organisation. In the next section, hypotheses 5 and 6 will be assessed to testify whether trust is the missing variable between organisational communication and organisational commitment.

4.2.3 The ‘mediating effect’

In this section, the research tests the mediating effect proposed in hypotheses 5 and 6. In order to test the mediating influence of trust, the causal steps approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was adopted (see Figure 4-7). This is a widely used method to assess mediating effects (MacKinnon, Fairchild and Fritz 2007). The causal steps approach uses the following three regression equations:

$$(4.1)$$

$$(4.2)$$

$$(4.3)$$

Where **X** is the independent variable; **Y** is the dependent variable; **M** is the mediator; **c** is the coefficient relating the independent variable and the dependent variable; **c'** is the coefficient relating the independent variable to the dependent variable; **b** is the coefficient relating the mediator to the dependent variable adjusted for the independent variable; **a** is the coefficient relating the independent variable to the mediator; α , β and γ are intercepts; ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 are residuals. Four steps are involved in the Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach for assessing mediation:

1. To test a significant relationship of the independent variable with the dependent variable, which means “c” in equation 1 should be significant;
2. To test a significant relationship of the independent variable the hypothesized mediating variable, which means “a” in equation 3 should be significant;

3. The mediating variable must be significantly related to the dependent variable, which means “b” in equation 2 should be significant.

4. The coefficient relating the independent variable to the dependent variable must be larger (in absolute value) than the coefficient relating the independent variable and the mediating variable predicting the dependent variable, which means $c > c'$ (MacKinnon et al. 2007).

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Figure 4-7 Mediation Model (adopted from Baron and Kenny (1986))

Test of significance

The causal step method has a level of error and requires a test of significance. MacKinnon, Lockwood and William (2004) compared 14 methods to assess the mediation effect, and found that the power to detect mediating effects was very low, when employing Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediator test approach. This is due to the low power of tests of mediation based on dividing an estimator, either ab or $c - c'$, of the mediated effect by its corresponding standard error is that the resulting ratio does not always follow a normal distribution (MacKinnon, Lockwood and William 2004).

As a supplement to the Baron and Kenny's (1960) approach, the bootstrapping method is employed for testing the effects of intervening variables (Williams and Mackinnon 2008). Bootstrapping generates an empirical representation of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect by treating the obtained sample of size n as a representation of the population in miniature, one that is repeatedly resampled during analysis as a means of mimicking the original sampling process (Hayes 2009). The advantages of bootstrapping method are:

1. The inference is based on an estimate of the indirect effect itself; it makes no assumptions about the shape of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect, thereby it reduces the problem mentioned above in the causal step method.
2. There is no need to consider standard error when making the inference.
3. It can be used to make inferences about indirect effects in any intervening variable model, regardless of how complex and how numerous the paths between the dependent variable and independent variable are (Hayes 2009).

The bootstrapping process of taking bootstrap samples and computing the indirect effect is then repeated numerous times (e.g. 2000 times) and as a result the large number of estimates of the indirect effect forms a bootstrap distribution. If the confidence interval does not contain zero, it can be assumed that the mediation effect is accurate (Fritz and MacKinnon 2007).

Mediation Effect Size

The standard indirect effect is calculated as the product of the standardized estimates of ab . The ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect (i.e. ab/c) is often interpreted as the proportion of the total effect that is mediated. Indirect effect ab is smaller than direct effect c , which yields a proportion of less than 1. Additionally, the sign of ab and c may be different. When ab has the same sign as c , it can be interpreted that a positive proportion of the variance in dependent variables is explained by the indirect effect; whereas when ab has a different sign to c , it means that a negative proportion of the variance in the dependent variables is explained by the indirect effect.

Testing hypotheses 5 and 6

In this section, hypotheses 5 and 6 will be examined. Amos 18 (Arbuckle 2009), which is currently the only available software package that directly produces bootstrapped percentile and bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects, was used to perform the bootstrap analysis. To begin with, the software drew a three-variable path diagram, with error terms for the endogenous mediator and the dependent variable. Then, 2,000 bootstrap samples were set by changing the bootstrap option because (the default value in Amos 18 is 200). Moreover, it was necessary to override the confidence intervals in both the bias-corrected and the percentile options (the original is set to 90%) because this study needed to test a 95% confidence interval. By clicking the 'calculate estimate' button, Amos 18 can provide the estimated coefficient a, b, c and c' and their corresponding standard errors, as well as the confidence intervals in the output file.

The following section will discuss the results of testing hypotheses 5a, 5b, 6a and 6b respectively using the mediation effect and bootstrap methods.

Hypothesis 5a: Trust in supervisor is the mediator between supervisory communication and trust in organisation.

In hypothesis 5a, the dependent variable is trust in organisation, the independent variable is supervisory communication, and the mediator is trust in supervisor. Table 4-12 below shows the results of the regression analysis. The total effect (c) of OCS on TIO is 0.848, the standard error is 0.036 ($p < 0.01$). The mediator variable (TIS) was regressed on the independent variable (OCS) to obtain the regression coefficient a ($B = 0.965$). In addition, the dependent variable (TIO) was regressed simultaneously on both the mediator (TIS) and the independent variable (OCS). The analysis in Table 4-12 provides the unstandardised regression coefficient for path b ($B = 0.329$) and c' ($B = 0.530$) respectively.

Significance test: The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval is shown in Table 4-12. This assumed more accurate confidence interval (0.208, 0.437) excludes zero, thus supporting hypothesis 5a, that the indirect effect of supervisory communication on

trust in organisation through the mediator of trust in supervisor, is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p=0.001$). The percentile 95% confidence interval also does not include zero, which further supports hypothesis 5a.

Effect size: The ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect ab/c is:

This can be interpreted to show that 37.4% of the total effect of supervisory communication on trust in organisation is mediated by trust in supervisor.

Table 4-12 Table to illustrate the Bootstrap method for testing the significance of mediating effects

Path/effect	Bootstrap estimate		95% Confidence interval			
	B	SE	Bootstrap percentile	p	Bootstrap with bias correction	p
c (OCS TIO)	0.848	0.036	0.813,0.879	0.001	0.783,0.924	0.001
a (OCS TIS)	0.965	0.036	0.898,1.037	0.001	0.898,1.036	0.001
b (TIS TIO)	0.329	0.062	0.212,0.450	0.001	0.212,0.448	0.001
c'	0.530	0.070	0.393,0.668	0.001	0.398,0.676	0.001
a*b	0.318	0.060	0.207,0.437	0.001	0.208,0.437	0.001

Note. OCS=supervisor communication; TIS=Trust in supervisor; TIO=Trust in organisation

B=path coefficient; SE=standard errors

Hypothesis 5b: Trust in co-worker is the mediator between co-worker communication and trust in organisation.

In hypothesis 5b, the dependent variable is trust in organisation, the independent variable is co-worker communication, and the mediator is trust in co-worker.

Table 4-13 shows the results of the regression analysis. The total effect (c) of OCC on TIO is 1.139, and the standard error is 0.047 ($p < 0.01$). The mediating variable (TIC) was regressed on the independent variable (OCC) to obtain the regression coefficient a ($B = 1.098$). In addition, the dependent variable (TIO) was regressed simultaneously on both the mediator (TIC) and the independent variable (OCC). The analysis in Table 4-13 provides the unstandardised regression coefficient for path b ($B = -0.147$) and c' ($B = 1.3$) respectively. The results in Table 4-13 show that when the mediator TIC was controlled, the effect of OCC on TIO is not significantly reduced ($c' = 1.300$, $c = 1.139$, and $c' > c$), thus there was insufficient evidence to support hypothesis 5b. It can therefore be concluded that trust in co-worker is not a mediator between co-worker communication and trust in organisation.

Table 4-13 Table to illustrate the Bootstrap methods for testing the significance of mediating effects

Path/effect	Bootstrap 95% Confidence interval estimate					
	B	SE	Bootstrap percentile	p	Bootstrap bias correction	with p
c (OCC TIO)	1.139	0.047	0.991,1.305	0.001	0.991,1.305	0.001
a (OCC TIC)	1.098	0.047	1.013,1.202	0.001	1.009,1.194	0.001
b (TIC TIO)	-0.147	0.161	-0.528,0.110	0.324	-0.540,0.106	0.3
c'	1.300	0.203	0.962,1.753	0.001	0.94,1.743	0.001
$a*b$	-0.162	0.178	-0.592,0.114	0.301	-0.581,0.119	0.324

Note. OCC=Co-worker communication; TIC=Trust in co-worker; TIO=Trust in organisation.
B=path coefficient; SE=standard errors

Hypothesis 6a: Trust in organisation is the mediator between trust in supervisor and organisational commitment.

In hypothesis 6a, the dependent variable is organisational commitment, the independent variable is trust in supervisor, and the mediator is trust in organisation. Table 4-14 shows the results of the regression analysis. The total effect (c) of TIS on OCT is 0.722 and the standard error is 0.036 ($p < 0.01$). The mediating variable (TIO)

was regressed on the independent variable (TIS) to obtain the regression coefficient a ($B=0.721$). In addition, the dependent variable (OCT) was regressed simultaneously on both the mediator (TIO) and the independent variable (TIS). The analysis in Table 4-14 provides the unstandardized regression coefficient for path b ($B=0.106$) and c' ($B=0.856$) respectively.

Significance test: The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval is shown in Table 4-14. This assumed more accurate confidence interval (0.515, 0.721) excludes zero, thus supporting hypothesis 6a that the indirect effect of trust in supervisor on organisational commitment through the mediator of trust in organisation is statistically significant at the 0.05 confidence level ($p=0.001$). The percentile 95% confidence interval also does not include zero, which further supports hypothesis 6a.

Effect size: The ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect ab/c is

This can be interpreted to show that 85.5% of the total effect of trust in supervisor on organisational commitment is mediated by trust in organisation.

Table 4-14 Table to illustrate the Bootstrap method for testing the significance of mediating effects

Path/effect	Bootstrap 95% Confidence interval					
	estimate					
	B	SE	Bootstrap percentile	p	Bootstrap with bias correction	p
c (TIS OCT)	0.722	0.036	0.654,0.793	0.001	0.652,0.791	0.001
a (TIS TIO)	0.721	0.035	0.650,0.788	0.001	0.650,0.788	0.001
b (TIO OCT)	0.856	0.070	0.722,1.001	0.001	0.708,0.991	0.002
c'	0.106	0.055	-0.006,0.213	0.064	-0.003,0.218	0.054
$a*b$	0.617	0.052	0.517,0.725	0.001	0.515,0.721	0.001

Note. OCT=Organisational commitment; TIS=Trust in supervisor; TIO=Trust in organisation.

B=path coefficient; SE=standard errors

Hypothesis 6b: Trust in organisation is the mediator between trust in co-worker and organisational commitment.

In hypothesis 6b, the dependent variable is organisational commitment, the independent variable is trust in co-worker, and the mediator is trust in organisation. Table 4-15 shows the results of the regression analysis. The total effect (c) of TIC on OCT is 0.710, the standard error is 0.044 ($p < 0.01$). The mediating variable (TIO) was regressed on the independent variable (TIC) to obtain the regression coefficient a ($B = 0.756$). In addition, the dependent variable (OCT) was regressed simultaneously on both the mediator (TIO) and the independent variable (TIC). The analysis in Table 4-15 provides the unstandardized regression coefficient for path b ($B = 0.852$) and c' ($B = 0.066$) respectively.

Significance test: The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval is shown in Table 4-15. This assumed more accurate confidence interval (0.549, 0.749) excludes zero, thus it supports hypothesis 6b that the indirect effect of trust in supervisor on organisational commitment through the mediator of trust in organisation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.001$). The percentile 95% confidence interval also does not include zero, which further confirms hypothesis 6b.

Effect size: The ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect ab/c is:

This shows that that 90.7% of the total effect of trust in co-worker on organisational commitment is mediated by trust in organisation.

Table 4-15 Table to illustrate the Bootstrap method for testing the significance of mediating effects

<i>Path/effect</i>	<i>Bootstrap 95% Confidence interval</i>					
	<i>estimate</i>					
	B	SE	Bootstrap percentile	p	Bootstrap with bias correction	p
c (TIC → OCT)	0.710	0.044	0.625,0.796	0.001	0.626,0.797	0.001
a (TIC → TIO)	0.756	0.046	0.669,0.853	0.001	0.673,0.858	0.001
b (TIO → OCT)	0.852	0.048	0.759,0.949	0.001	0.755,0.943	0.001
c'	0.066	0.045	-0.023,0.152	0.151	-0.020,0.156	0.133
a*b	0.644	0.051	0.547,0.746	0.001	0.549,0.749	0.001

Note. OCT=Organisational commitment; TIC=Trust in co-worker; TIO=Trust in organisation. B=path coefficient; SE=standard errors

4.3 Assessing the Structural Model

After conducting an analysis of the hypotheses, the interrelationships between the four variables in the hypothesised model one (see Figure 4-8) were supported. However, the data did not confirm the theoretical relationships in hypothesised model two, thus the hypothesised model two was not supported.

In this section, a further assessment of hypothesised model one will be conducted to test the adequacy of the structural model. Several indicators of fit including Chi-Square (CMIN), Degree of Freedom (df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to examine the goodness of fitness of the model.

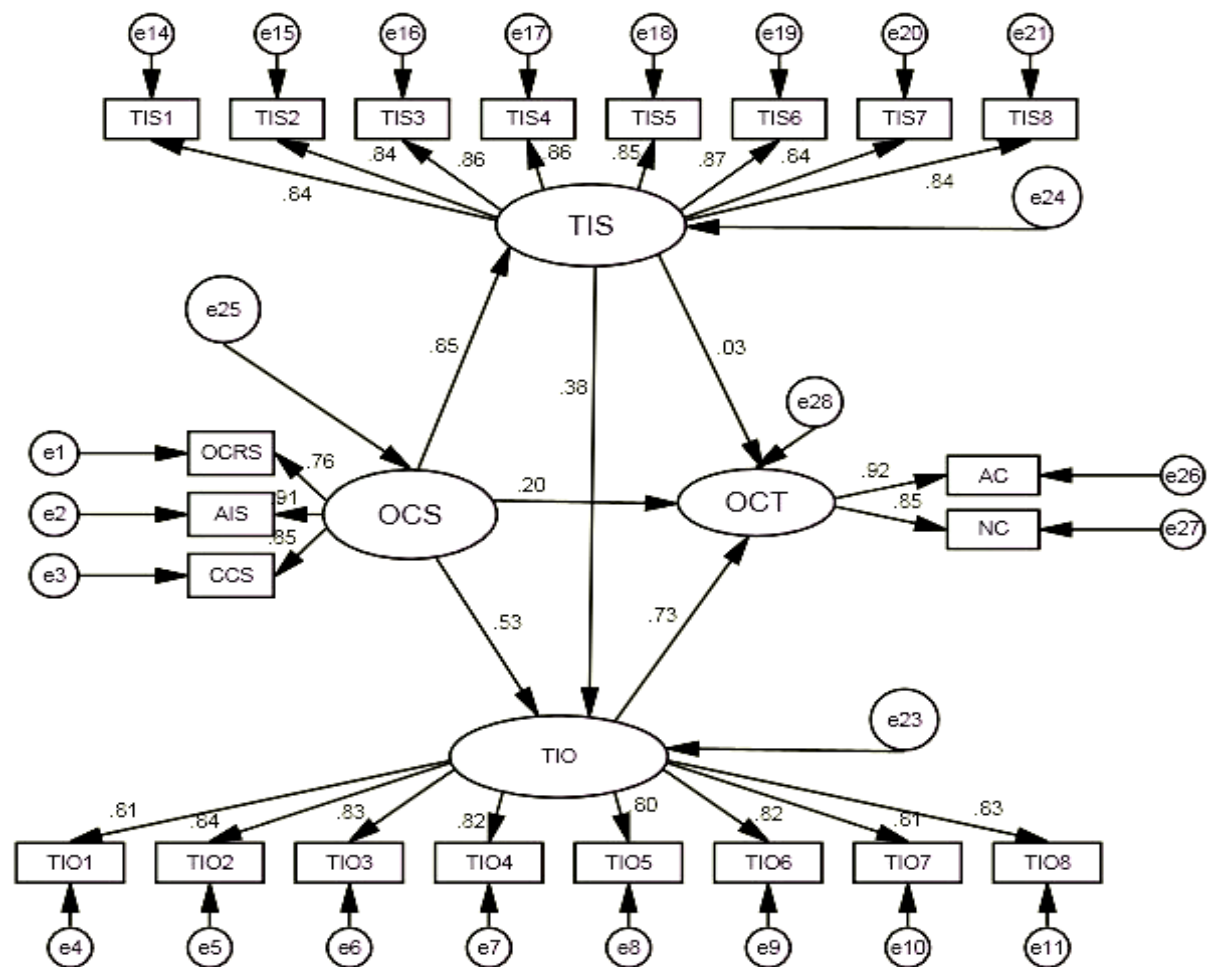


Figure 4-8 Hypothesised model one – supervisor foci

As shown in Figure 4-8, the hypothesised model 1 is a model with three paths and two mediators. Overall, the fit indices provided by AMOS software suggest that the data fit well to the model. Table 4-16 shows the indices of fit for hypothesised model one.

Table 0-16 Indicators of fit for model one

Model	Chi-Square	df	CFI	NNFI	GFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized Model	508.726	183	0.954	0.947	0.901	0.072

Hoe (2008) suggested that a value of approximately 0.08 or less for the RMSEA would indicate a reasonable error of approximation. The goodness of fit indices of NNFI, CFI and GFI less than 0.90 can be regarded as the cut off level. In light of the criteria mentioned above, the results displayed in Table 4-16 indicate that hypothesised model one is an acceptable measurement model for demonstrating the interrelationships between supervisory communication, trust in supervisor, trust in organisation and organisational commitment.

According to Taylor et al (2008), estimating the three-path (there are two mediators between independent and dependant variables) requires the following three regression equations to be calculated:

$$(4.4)$$

$$(4.5)$$

$$(4.6)$$

In these equations, Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, and M1 and M2 are the two mediators. For this study, therefore, Y is organisational commitment; X is supervisory communication, M1 is trust in supervisor; and M2 is trust in organisation. Table 4-17 below displays the results of regression coefficient β using AMOS 18 software.

Table 4-17 The results for parameters in the model

Coefficient	Estimation	SE	t-value ()
	0.847	0.016	52.9375
	0.378	0.069	5.478261
	0.734	0.077	9.532468
	0.198	0.077	2.571429
	0.534	0.068	7.852941
	0.026	0.059	0.440678

Significance test: In the hypothesised model one, the degree of freedom is 183. According to the t-value calculator, the critical t value for a two-tailed at the 95% confidence interval, .

Table 4-17 shows that the t-values of , and , were all above 1.973012 (=53.1875; =5.478261; and 9.532468). All three coefficients are therefore significant meaning that the joint significance test supports the hypothesis that there is a mediator between supervisory communication and organisational commitment.

Effect size

The effect from supervisory communication to organisational commitment can be divided into three-path indirect effect and two-path indirect effect. The three-path: supervisory communication-trust in supervisor →trust in organisation →organisational commitment. The two-path indirect effect has two different paths from supervisory communication to organisational commitment as shown in Figure 4-8:

1. Supervisory communication →trust in supervisor→organisational commitment
2. supervisory communication →trust in organization →organisational commitment

Three-path indirect effect:

Two-path indirect effect:

Total indirect effect = three-path indirect effect + two-path indirect effect =
+ + = 0.235 + 0.022126 + 0.391956 = 0.648976

Effect size = total indirect effect/total effect=0.6498976/0.847 100%=77%;

This shows that 77% of the total effect of supervisory communication on organisational commitment is mediated by both trust in supervisor and trust in organisation.

4.4 Differences among Demographic Groups

As discussed in section 4.11, this study reviewed responses from 757 employees in Chinese enterprises, with varied demographic characteristics. It is assumed that employees' demographic status is likely to be associated with their perceptions of organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. In the following section, the different demographic characteristics of respondents will be examined on the six scales and their subscales.

4.4.1 Differences between genders

Two gender groups exist; male and female. The t-test assesses whether the mean results of the two gender groups are statistically different. Table 4-18 below shows the results of the t-test which examined the impact of gender groups on the scales of organisational communication, trust, organisational commitment and their subscales.

Table 4-18 Demographic differences by gender in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Mean		t	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	Male	Female			
1. OCS	3.3617	3.1864	3.558	0.000	Male>Female
OCRS	3.3900	3.1092	4.267	0.000	Male>Female
AIS	3.3510	3.2171	2.763	0.006	Male>Female
CCS	3.3781	3.3168	3.846	0.000	Male>Female
2. OCC	3.4751	3.3932	1.850	0.065	None
OCRC	3.7128	3.7066	.110	0.913	None
AIC	3.3636	3.2569	2.303	0.022	Male>Female
CCC	3.4846	3.3761	1.974	0.049	Male>Female
3. TIS	3.4769	3.3647	1.884	0.060	None
4. TIC	3.5751	3.5249	1.001	0.317	None
5. TIO	3.3264	3.2974	.512	0.609	None
6. OCT	3.2915	3.2349	1.006	0.315	None
AC	3.3641	3.3243	.672	0.502	None
NC	3.2044	3.1271	1.292	0.197	None

Note: OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment

As shown in Table 4-18, six of the 14 dimensions showed differences between the gender groups. These dimensions which show a difference in significance between the two groups include supervisory communication and its three sub-scales, as well as the sub-scales relating to adequacy of information received from co-workers and communication channels with co-workers.

The results demonstrate that males scored significantly higher on all dimensions than females. For example, significant differences in employees' satisfaction in supervisory communication were found between males and females. Male employees reported higher levels of satisfaction in supervisory communication and its sub-scales

of supervisory communication relationships, adequacy of information received from supervisor, and communication channels with supervisor, in comparison with female employees. An analysis of the differences between gender groups also reveals variation in supervisory communication between the six main dimensions.

4.4.2 Differences between age groups

The variable of age was divided into four groups: below 29; 30 to 39; 40 to 49 and over 50. An ANOVA test was conducted to test how age influences different employee perceptions of the three constructs and their sub-scales. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in Table 4-19. In almost every component, differences were found in employees' responses to the three constructs, except for the dimension of affective commitment. This supports the findings of an existing study which was conducted in the Chinese context (Wang 2005), which found no difference between age groups regarding affective commitment.

The employees in groups A and B, who are below 39 years old had much higher scores in all dimensions, while the two older age groups (40-49, >50) had lower scores in all dimensions. These results may be explained by the finding that employees younger than 39 are more satisfied with organisational communication, resulting in higher levels of trust in the workplace and organisational commitment. On the other hand, employees aged 40 and above were found to be less satisfied with organisational communication, leading to lower levels of trust and organisational commitment. The results from the ANOVA analysis therefore support hypotheses 1 and 4.

Table 4-19 Demographic differences by age in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Mean				F	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	A (<29)	B (29-39)	C (40-49)	D (50)			
1. OCS	3.4224	3.3717	3.1868	3.1359	6.116	.000	A>B>C>D
OCRS	3.3875	3.3503	3.1758	3.0686	3.124	.025	A>B>C>D
AIS	3.4164	3.3662	3.2017	3.2248	4.795	.003	A>B>D>C
CCS	3.4695	3.4068	3.1429	2.8750	9.351	.000	A>B>C>D
2. OCC	3.5252	3.5261	3.3712	3.2074	5.681	.001	B>A>C>D
OCRC	3.6780	3.7941	3.6896	3.4588	2.238	.083	B>C>A>D
AIC	3.4494	3.4045	3.2280	3.1203	6.842	.000	A>B>C>D
CCC	3.5427	3.5254	3.3668	3.1324	4.835	.002	A>B>C>D
3. TIS	3.4919	3.5212	3.3486	3.3309	2.583	.052	B>A>C>D
4. TIC	3.6128	3.6165	3.5137	3.2904	3.049	.028	B>A>C>D
5. TIO	3.4116	3.3994	3.2215	3.3346	3.352	.019	A>B>D>C
6. OCT	3.3629	3.3432	3.1818	3.2647	2.895	.034	A>B>D>C
AC	3.3848	3.4202	3.2825	3.3627	1.498	.214	None
NC	3.3350	3.2508	3.0610	3.1471	4.623	.003	A>B>D>C

Note: OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment.

4.4.3 Differences between levels of education

Education variables have been divided into four groups; high school diploma, three year college degree, four year college degree and graduate school degree (masters or doctorate). An ANOVA test was conducted to test the effects of different levels of education on the employees' perceptions of the three constructs and their sub-scales. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in Table 4-20.

Table 4-20 Demographic differences by education level in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Mean				F	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	A	B	C	D			
1. OCS	3.1078	3.3022	3.5266	3.4762	16.818	.000	C>D>B>A
OCRS	3.0846	3.2943	3.5134	3.3200	9.203	.000	C>D>B>A
AIS	3.1426	3.2921	3.5095	3.5000	13.447	.000	C>D>B>A
CCS	3.0031	3.3435	3.5963	3.5100	21.776	.000	C>D>B>A
2. OCC	3.3724	3.4002	3.5773	3.5520	5.173	.002	C>D>B>A
OCRC	3.7368	3.6378	3.7529	3.6800	.956	.413	None
AIC	3.2223	3.2916	3.4730	3.5127	7.178	.000	D>C>B>A
CCC	3.3297	3.4020	3.6444	3.5000	7.248	.000	C>D>B>A
3. TIS	3.3212	3.3818	3.6484	3.4750	6.761	.000	C>D>B>A
4. TIC	3.5166	3.5225	3.6564	3.4850	1.941	.121	None
5. TIO	3.2055	3.2748	3.5241	3.4600	7.313	.000	C>D>B>A
6. OCT	3.1793	3.2289	3.4273	3.4873	5.010	.002	C>D>B>A
AC	3.2750	3.2875	3.5152	3.5067	4.285	.005	C>D>B>A
NC	3.0644	3.1586	3.3209	3.4640	5.039	.002	D>C>B>A

Note: A, high school diploma; B, Three-year college degree; C, Four-year college degree; D, Graduate School degree (master or doctor); OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment.

As shown in Table 4-20, most comparisons demonstrate significant differences, while only the two dimensions of co-worker communication relationship, and trust in co-worker revealed no differences. In all subscales and overall scores of supervisory communication, co-worker communication, trust in supervisor, trust in co-worker, trust in organisation and organisational commitment, employees with the lowest education level (high school diploma) gave the lowest score. Employees with a medium level of education (i.e. three or four year college degree) gave a middling

score to their organisation, whereas employees with college degrees or higher degrees (masters or doctorate) gave the highest score to their organisation for each component. Therefore the score level corresponds to the level of education. The results are quite different from those of other studies conducted in a Chinese context (Wang 2005), which report that highly educated employees gave the lowest scores to their organisation, while employees with the lowest level of education gave the highest scores.

Employees with masters or doctoral degrees had higher normative commitment than those from groups with other levels of education. These findings can be interpreted to mean that employees with a higher level of education are more likely to feel a moral obligation to remain with the organisation.

4.4.4 Difference between management level groups

This study considers employees from five different managerial levels of the organisation; normal day shift workers, normal night shift workers, junior management level, medium management level, and top management level. An ANOVA test was performed to analyse the differences between employee perceptions at each managerial level regarding the three constructs and their sub-scales. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in Table 4-21.

The results of the ANOVA test demonstrate that in most components, the employees of the five managerial groups have different responses, except when comparing the components of trust in co-worker and communication relationship with co-worker.

Employees in a senior management position or other high position gave a higher score in all dimensions, except for the component of co-worker communication relationship, for which those working at a top management level gave the lowest score (3.5). This could be explained by the restrictions senior managers feel they have on the amount of time they are able to spend speaking with colleagues due to their work role responsibilities.

On the other hand, normal workers including night shift and day shift workers gave responses suggesting lower levels of satisfaction with all three dimensions. According to the results, night shift workers have the lowest level of both affective commitment and normative commitment, and day shift workers have the second lowest level in these components. On the contrary, the results show that managers tend to be more committed to their organisation.

Table 4-21 Demographic differences by management level in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Mean					F	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	A	B	C	D	E			
1. OCS	3.1626	3.1441	3.4558	3.7143	3.9365	14.526	.000	E>D>C>A>B
OCRS	3.1107	3.1508	3.4515	3.7132	3.7778	8.520	.000	E>D>C>B>A
AIS	3.1886	3.1622	3.4347	3.7060	3.9881	12.621	.000	E>D>C>A>B
CCS	3.1107	3.0754	3.5330	3.7442	3.8750	14.916	.000	E>D>C>A>B
2. OCC	3.3813	3.3869	3.4934	3.7302	3.6250	4.118	.003	D>E>C>B>A
OCRC	3.7218	3.7296	3.6564	3.8419	3.5000	.718	.579	None
AIC	3.2372	3.2554	3.3897	3.6638	3.6970	6.190	.000	E>D>C>B>A
CCC	3.3521	3.3204	3.5750	3.7733	3.5833	6.280	.000	D>E>C>A>B
3. TIS	3.3460	3.3141	3.5625	3.6948	3.9167	4.947	.001	E>D>C>A>B
4. TIC	3.5528	3.4899	3.5557	3.7791	3.7917	1.766	.134	None
5. TIO	3.2024	3.2280	3.4534	3.6715	3.7292	6.770	.000	E>D>C>B>A
6. OCT	3.1139	3.1923	3.4252	3.7040	3.9697	10.832	.000	E>D>C>B>A
AC	3.1886	3.2588	3.5288	3.7791	3.9722	10.513	.000	E>D>C>B>A
NC	3.0235	3.1126	3.3009	3.6140	3.9667	8.833	.000	E>D>C>B>A

Note: A, Normal day shift workers; B, Normal night shift workers ;C, Junior manager; D, Medium manager; E, top management; OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment.

4.4.5 Differences between tenure groups

Tenure variables have been divided into five groups; 1-3 years; 3-5 years, 5-7 years; 7-10 years and more than 10 years employment with their company. Employees who have worked in their organisation for less than one year were not included for the research. The ANOVA test was used to examine the impact which the different periods of experience with the organisation have on employees' perceptions of the three constructs and their sub-scales. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in Table 4-22.

Table 4-22 Demographic differences by length of working experience in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Mean					F	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	A (1-3)	B (3-5)	C (5-7)	D (7-10)	E (>10)			
1. OCS	3.4899	3.4629	3.4778	3.4695	3.1547	10.564	.000	A>C>D>B>E
OCRS	3.4570	3.4533	3.5167	3.4635	3.1251	6.660	.000	C>EA>B>E
AIS	3.4647	3.4571	3.4548	3.4799	3.1765	8.719	.000	D>A>B>C>E
CCS	3.6031	3.4900	3.5292	3.4375	3.1009	11.689	.000	A>C>B>D>E
2. OCC	3.5268	3.5633	3.5383	3.5359	3.3708	3.584	.007	B>C>D>A>E
OCRC	3.6969	3.7387	3.6600	3.6875	3.7176	.117	.977	None
AIC	3.4649	3.4618	3.4561	3.5043	3.2136	7.658	.000	D>A>B>C>E
CCC	3.4845	3.6233	3.6125	3.4336	3.3698	2.982	.019	B>C>A>D>E
3. TIS	3.5361	3.3633	3.5563	3.6680	3.3606	3.094	.015	D>C>A>B>E
4. TIC	3.6198	3.6233	3.5813	3.6113	3.5138	.938	.442	None
5. TIO	3.4820	3.3383	3.4313	3.5078	3.2307	3.867	.004	D>A>C>B>E
6. OCT	3.4489	3.2994	3.3333	3.4901	3.1810	4.326	.002	D>A>C>B>E
AC	3.4605	3.3533	3.3917	3.5833	3.2813	2.648	.032	D>A>C>B>E
NC	3.4330	3.2347	3.2633	3.3781	3.0607	6.012	.000	A>D>C>B>E

Note: OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment.

The results from the ANOVA test (Table 4-22) have yielded several important differences between the tenure groups. Only two dimensions; co-workers communication relationship and trust in co-worker, did not show any significant differences.

Employees, who have worked for more than 10 years in their company, gave the lowest level in all dimensions. However, they scored every dimension above average, a result which could be interpreted to mean that colleagues consider all elements to be at an acceptable level.

Employees with tenure of 7-10 years provided the highest evaluation of organisational commitment and its subscales of affective commitment, and they also revealed more trust in their supervisors and organisation. Respondents with 1-3 years of experience were found to be the most satisfied with supervisory communication, communication channels with supervisor and normative commitment.

4.5 Differences between SOEs and JVEs

Two types of organisation have been assessed; SOEs and JVEs. The t-test assesses whether the means of the two groups (SOEs and JVEs) are statistically different from each other or not. Table 4-23 below shows the results of the t-test which analysed the impact of organisational type on organisational communication, trust, organisational commitment and their subscales.

As Table 4-23 shows, most comparisons revealed significant differences. However, communication relationship with co-workers did not show any differences in responses between employees from the two different types of organisation. This could be explained by the fact that the majority of respondents are Chinese, whose social background means they are more likely to maintain close communication relationships and share opinions with their peers.

The results demonstrate that employees in JVEs gave significantly higher scores on all the dimensions than employees of SOEs. For example, a significant difference in employees' satisfaction in supervisory communication was found between those

working in SOEs and those in JVEs. Employees in JVEs reported higher levels of satisfaction in supervisory communication and its sub-scales, (supervisory communication relationships, adequacy of information from supervisor and communication channels with supervisor), than was reported by employees of SOEs.

Table 4-23 Demographic differences by gender in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment (n=757)

Variable	Organisation type		t	Sig.	Multiples Differences
	SOE	JVE			
1. OCS	3.1519	3.5191	7.318	0.000	JVE>SOE
OCRS	3.0806	3.5925	7.630	0.000	JVE>SOE
AIS	3.1857	3.4806	5.927	0.000	JVE>SOE
CCS	3.0869	3.5991	8.058	0.000	JVE>SOE
2. OCC	3.3671	3.5672	4.365	0.000	JVE>SOE
OCRC	3.6927	3.7419	0.825	0.410	None
AIC	3.2295	3.4714	5.060	0.000	JVE>SOE
CCC	3.3384	3.6123	4.824	0.000	JVE>SOE
3. TIS	3.3389	3.5844	3.974	0.000	JVE>SOE
4. TIC	3.5155	3.6193	1.984	0.048	JVE>SOE
5. TIO	3.2398	3.4486	3.552	0.000	JVE>SOE
6. OCT	3.2071	3.3732	2.836	0.005	JVE>SOE
AC	3.2893	3.4503	2.610	0.009	JVE>SOE
NC	3.1081	3.2808	2.769	0.006	JVE>SOE

Note: OCS, supervisory communication; OCRS, Supervisory communication relationship; AIS, Adequacy of information from supervisor; CCS, communication channels with supervisor; OCC, Co-worker communication OCRC, Co-worker communication relationship; AIC, Adequacy of information from co-worker; CCC, communication channels with co-worker; TIS, Trust in supervisor; TIC, Trust in co-worker; TIO, Trust in organisation; OCT, Organisational Commitment ; AC, Affective Commitment; NC, Normative Commitment.

4.6 Summary

This chapter started by presenting descriptive statistics according to respondents' demographic characteristics. Moreover, the means and standard deviations of the six main constructs (supervisory communication, co-worker communication, trust in supervisor, trust in co-worker, trust in organisation and organisational commitment) and their subscales (76 questions) were provided. Following that, a correlation analysis was conducted using AMOS software, the results of which support hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4, with a moderate correlation coefficient. Following the causal steps, the mediation test was carried out to examine hypotheses 5 and 6. Hypotheses 5a, 6a and 6b were supported by these statistical tests. Trust in supervisor can therefore be assumed as a strong mediator between supervisory communication and trust in organisation, which was supported by the results of the bootstrap method, demonstrating its significance. 77% of the total effect of trust in supervisor on organisational commitment is mediated by trust in organisation. The effect of trust in co-worker on organisational commitment is also mediated by trust in organisation as demonstrated by the data. However, hypothesis 5b, which involved testing trust in co-worker as the mediator between co-worker communication and trust in organisation was not supported by the results, suggesting that trust in co-worker does not have an impact on the relationship between co-worker communication and trust in organisation.

Furthermore, this study assessed the hypothesised Models 1 and 2. As hypothesis 5b was not supported, hypothesised Model 2 was also not supported by the quantitative data. The fit indices of hypothesised Model 1 suggest that Model 1 is reasonably supported by the data. 77% of the total effect from supervisory communication on organisational commitment is mediated by the compound effort of trust in supervisor and trust in organisation. At the end of this chapter, the effects of demographic variables on responses given by employees to the constructs and their subscales were discussed. The results revealed that employees with a high level of education and a high managerial level are more likely to be satisfied with organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. The results also showed that employees working in JVEs are more satisfied with organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment than those working in SOEs.

CHAPTER 5 MODEL EVALUATION

5.0 Preamble

The first part of this research involved the use of a questionnaire to obtain responses from employees in five Chinese organisations. The results of the questionnaire were then used to test a conceptual model and to update the model according to the research. To further support the findings from the questionnaire, the study also conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. Four managers from each of the five organisations were invited to participate in the interviews. Face-to-face interviews generally provide the most expansive source of information, and so this method was chosen to help understand the perspectives of the 20 managers regarding communication, trust and organisational commitment in their organisations. The interviews lasted between 21 and 60 minutes. The interviews conducted were semi-structured using the modified models taken from the first stage of the research as a checklist of points to be covered. However, the primary focus was to extract details of how each of the 20 managers views the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. The results of these interviews were also able to provide a method of evaluation for the modified model, and the data from this stage of the study were used to fine-tune it. This research also highlighted any areas which had not already been sufficiently explained, and which therefore merited further investigation. A review of the current literature was undertaken for the three subjects including organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment, from which conceptual models were developed, as shown in section 2.5. The aim of this stage was to evaluate the modified models and to provide evidence to further clarify and explain particular areas of interest. Follow-up interviews were then carried out with selected managers from the five organisations who had provided particularly valuable insights into the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises. The most useful information taken from the follow-up interviews will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Demographic characteristics of interviewees

The model evaluation is based on the responses from 20 interviews conducted with managers from the Chinese enterprises which were involved with the initial questionnaire survey. The models and interview questions are sent to managers before the interview. Interviews were conducted in both English and Chinese depending on the native language of the interviewee, and the responses were then transcribed and translated into English by the interviewer. Due to issues of confidentiality, the names of the company and identities of individuals remain anonymous. The interviews are instead coded by number, type of organisation and nationality, in order to enable identification by the reader. J means JVEs, S means SOEs, the N means non-Chinese, the C means Chinese, and the number refers to the number of the interviewee. For example, a manager from a JVE who is non-Chinese would be referred to as JN1, and a manager from a SOE who is Chinese would be referred to as SC1. Information about the interviewees is summarised in Table 5-1.

Of the 20 interviewees, 14 were Chinese nationals, of which six have worked in both SOEs and JVEs, meaning they were able to discuss the differences between the two types of enterprise regarding communication, trust and commitment. The six interviewees of non-Chinese nationality described and discussed the concept of organisational behaviour in their respective organisations from western perspectives. An analysis of all the responses from the interviews found a general agreement between all interviewees that management in Chinese enterprises is changing in a positive way, which may help to improve the attitudes and behaviour of Chinese employees.

Table 5-1 showed that most of the managers are well-educated. Twelve managers have Master or above degree, 3 of them have PhD degrees. All managers, aged from 38-50, have worked in the company for more than 10 years. Twelve managers, 6 of whom were Chinese national and 6 of whom were non-Chinese, were able to point out the differences between the organisational operation and performance of JVEs and SOEs, as they were or are delegates working in the JVEs.

Table 5-1 Demographic characteristics of interviewees

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency						
		S1	S2	S3	J1	J2	Total	Percentage
Age	30-38	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
	39 to 49	3	3	3	3	2	14	70
	Over 50	1	1	1	1	1	5	25
Education	Three-year college degree	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
	Four-year college degree	2	2	2	1	0	7	35
	Post-graduate degree (masters or doctorate)	2	2	2	2	4	12	60
Tenure	10 to 19 years	2	0	0	1	2	5	25
	20 to 29years	1	4	3	2	2	12	60
	Over 30 years	1	0	1	1	0	3	15
Manage level	Top management level	1	3	2	2	2	10	50
	Senior management level	3	1	2	2	2	10	50
Experience	Worked in both SOE and JVE	2	1	1	4	4	12	60
	Worked only in SOE	2	3	3	0	0	8	40

The findings of the 20 interviews have been divided into two main sections. The first addresses the evaluation of the theoretical model, and the second compares the performance of organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in JVEs and SOEs.

5.2 Evaluation of the Theoretical Models

Twenty managers used the theoretical models for two months. Following this, each of the managers was able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the model. The following section will discuss the evaluation given by the managers of the vertical and horizontal model.

5.2.1 Evaluation of the vertical model

The vertical model attempts to display the exchange relationship between supervisors and subordinates. It assumes that supervisory communication leads to trust in supervisor; trust in supervisor leads to trust in organisation; and trust in organisation improves organisational commitment. Table 5-2 shows the responses given by managers regarding their degree of agreement with the vertical model.

Table 5-2 Agreement with vertical model

Evaluation	Category	Frequency						Percentage of total
		SOE1	SOE2	SOE3	JVE1	JVE2	Total	
Evaluation of vertical model	Agree	3	3	2	2	4	14	70%
	Partially Agree	1	1	0	2	0	4	20%
	Disagree	0	0	2	0	0	2	10%

As showed in Table 5-2, 14 managers (70%) agreed with the vertical model. They believe that communication with the supervisor is important, because through communication, subordinates can understand supervisor expectations and therefore improve their performance. Four managers partially agreed with the model, responding that they thought that part of the model was not consistent with the reality. Two managers disagreed entirely with the vertical model.

The vertical model was examined in three parts:

1. The relationship between communication and trust in supervisor;
2. The relationship between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation; and
3. The relationship between trust in organisation and organisational commitment.

Using cluster analysis, several themes emerged from analysing the text of each manager's interview for each of the three parts. Clusters of words to describe both shared and individual world views reinforce the emerging themes. Overall,

interviewees focus on their experiences to explain how they perceive the vertical model to work within their organisation.

1. The relationship between communication and trust in supervisor

The relationship between communication and trust in supervisor is the first part embedded within the vertical model. Twenty managers were asked their opinions on the relationship between supervisory communication and trust in supervisor. An analysis of this theme revealed four sub-themes, which were directly derived from the responses of interviewees.

- *Sufficient and necessary conditions*

Sixteen managers said that they believe there is a close relationship between the level of communication and trust in supervisor. This is particularly relevant for employees who are new to the company, as was illustrated by one of the managers in their interview:

“When I first started working here, I was not familiar with my colleagues, sometimes I argued with delegators from partner companies. As time goes by, through communication, I started to understand my colleagues; they are different from what I had originally thought. I realised that everyone is trying their best to work hard for the company; gradually, trust has been generated between us.” (JC1)

The manager therefore demonstrated his belief that communication is the bridge which connects people and increases interaction between them. Over time, depending on the development of communication, the trust which subordinates have in their supervisors is developed. This concept is consistent with the vertical model, which suggests that supervisory communication leads to trust in supervisor. Additionally, managers who were interviewed believe that the relationship between communication and trust in supervisor is a two-way, rather than a one-way relationship. A Chinese manager, who has worked for a JVE for 6 months emphasised that the level of trust in supervisor also impacts on communication:

“Good and effective communication can build trust. Once trust is established, we don’t need to have frequent communication. I would follow his orders without doubt, because I know and trust that his implementation strategies are a benefit for the organisation.” (JC5)

According to manager JC5, employees who have high levels of trust in their supervisors focus on quality, rather than the quantity of the communication with their supervisors. It is easy for them to develop agreements and understanding once a level of trust has been developed. One of the managers in an SOE who was interviewed talked about a strong relationship between communication and trust in supervisor:

“I think communication is the antecedent of trust, and trust is a necessary condition for communication. (SC8).

These statements were mentioned by the other four managers. From managers’ perspectives, the relationship between communication and trust is just like the story of “Chicken and egg”, it is hard to say which comes first, but it can be summarised that

“Communication and trust are correlated, and they impact on each other” (SC5).

In summary, participants reviewed the relationship between communication and trust, and they agreed that effective communication is a critical element for employees to build trust in their supervisor. However, two of the managers who were interviewed disagreed with the vertical model because they argue that it does not show the relationship between communication and trust in supervisor as a bidirectional relationship, whereas they believe it to be so.

The second theme discussed as part of the semi-structured interviews with senior managers was the concept of communication channels.

- *Communication channels*

The managers outlined several possible channels of communication which are available within their respective organisations. A Chinese junior manager from a SOE described the approach taken by his organisation:

“Every day we have scheduled meetings with all colleagues and supervisors in which our daily tasks are assigned. In addition, we

have a chance to speak with our supervisors alone by appointment every month. Occasionally, my supervisor circulates official government policy documents relating to organisational development.” (SC2)

In addition to traditional communication channels, electronic communication is also involved in delivering information. A Chinese manager working as a human resource manager in a SOE, indicated that his organisation is moving towards utilizing a variety of communication channels in order to stay in touch with employees. He believes that this move is a result of company growth:

“Since 1999, we have introduced office automative (OA) systems, which provide a platform to increase the level of electronic communication in the organisation. OA systems help us to conduct the “real-time enterprise, people-oriented” commitments in critical business processes to employees, and eliminate delays in their implementation, which substantially increases the company's competitiveness.” (SC7)

The managers interviewed also described their task of understanding which communication vehicles are best placed for which purposes and when:

“We adopt different ways to communicate by considering the importance and complexity of the issue. For simple issues, email and telephone communication is the most efficient way. For complex issues, face-to-face communication can achieve better results.” (JC1)

“We choose the method depending on the emergency and size of the issue. If it is not an urgent issue, I usually propose to solve the issue in formal meetings. If it is urgent, I adopt a face to face communication approach.” (SC3)

In comparison with email and telephone, face to face communication is the most effective way of communicating with colleagues. The director of the production department in a SOE said “face to face communication can provide timely, clear, direct and adequate information”. The director of the engineering division remarked that communicating face to face usually achieves better results because it is able to provide more insightful and valuable information:

“Communicating face-to-face gives us not only verbal information, but also non-verbal information, such as facial expressions, body

language, where you can interpret the real thoughts from the supervisor and how to deal with the problems properly.” (SC7)

The managers who were interviewed pointed out that face-to-face communication is a more intimate approach and can reduce both psychological distances between people and increase the emotional connection. Both Chinese and non-Chinese managers agreed on this point. A German manager working in a JVE said:

“Email is the worst way to communicate. It is only good for information. For discussion and to find out people’s opinions, it is not good because you cannot get an active response. With face-to-face communication, I can watch you, hear you, and see how your message is delivered even if we speak different languages, during which I feel that our personal relationship has improved.” (JN3)

Eleven interviewees said that they appreciate the opportunity to talk to their managers face-to-face. The responses showed that employees feel that holding a conversation with their supervisors enables them to judge their degree of willingness to engage with them, resulting in the growth of trust between supervisor and subordinate. One of the managers from a JVE expressed the importance of non-verbal communication for building trust in his supervisor.

“Communication is very important for gaining personal trust from subordinates. It is not only about speaking or sending e-mails, sometimes it is how you act while you are communicating. For example if you look unfriendly and absent-minded when you are talking to subordinates, but saying ‘I like you’, then nobody will believe you. The non-verbal communication is all part of the story.” (JN7)

In summary, the managers who were interviewed said that they find that supervisors have a wide range of communication channels to choose from when communicating with employees. However, there is a consensus that face-to-face communication is the best way to decide the level of trust in supervisor, as it provides an opportunity to observe the supervisor’s personal characteristics and leadership at close range.

The next theme to be discussed is the role of communication style in the interaction between supervisors and their subordinates. The interviews found that managers generally believe communication style to play an important role.

- *Style of communication*

Five managers discussed the concept that the communication style and skills used by supervisors influence the outcomes of their conversations with subordinates. Some supervisors were apparently able to communicate openly and freely, which in turn enhances the trust which employees have in them. However, those managers who tended to be aggressive are unable to win the respect of employees. A Dutch manager who has been working in a JVE for 4 years commented that:

“Communication can happen in different ways and styles, rather than just being commanding. In some Chinese enterprises I have visited, the top manager commands and controls everything; they are the thinkers and the employees just do what the top manager have told them to. This is not good for developing an atmosphere of trust.” (JN8)

Some of the Chinese managers who have worked in both JVEs and SOEs have also commented on such a scenario in which the Chinese managers prefer to control everything and claim that all their decisions are right. A Chinese manager who was interviewed has illustrated this situation below:

“I used to work with a supervisor, who insisted on his own ideas and refused to listen to any advice. There is an old Chinese saying ‘in order to show his authority, the leader must find subordinates’ incompetence in the work.’ In this situation, I wouldn’t suggest any different opinions to my supervisor; I would just finish the work he has asked me to do. Do you think I trust him? Do you think he deserves my trust? The answer is ‘No’.”(SC6)

In summary, the managers who were interviewed generally said that the level of trust which employees have in their supervisor is influenced by the communication style that their supervisor adopts. They implies that they would rather work with managers who are good listeners and able to accept the advice of others.

The next theme considers how managers believe that the amount of information provided by a company is also a benchmark for the efficacy of communication.

- *Amount of information*

According to the descriptions given by managers in the interviews, the “amount of information” could also influence subordinate’s trust in their supervisor. The respondents agreed that every member of an organisation would like to be adequately informed. However, managers gave different opinions on the definition of “adequate information”. A German manager in a JVE defined it:

“Enough information is often defined by the receiver, not the sender. The information is sufficient due to the fact that my boss and my subordinates are not complaining, and I am not complaining.”(JN3)

However, a Chinese manager in a SOE gave a different definition of adequate information:

“I don’t think everyone is satisfied with the amount information they receive. For me, the amount of information my supervisors provide me with is not always enough when I am working. But I will ask for information from different sources, such as my colleagues, and supervisors who are not my direct supervisors.” (SC11)

Despite the different definitions of “adequate information” supplied by the managers, there is a consensus that subordinates are likely to feel less vulnerable and more willing to rely on supervisors if they receive enough information. A German manager identified the relationship between the amount of information and the level of trust in the supervisor:

“We need to have sufficient communication, and the communication needs to be open, proper, enough and also not too much, thus communication will result in building up trust.” (JN3)

In summary, managers suggested that having enough information serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it can reduce the uncertainty of the subordinates. Secondly, it increases the trustworthiness of the supervisor. However, the managers gave different opinions of the definition of “enough information”, and the extent to which it impacts on the relationship between supervisory communication and trust in supervisor.

2. The relationship between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation

The relationship between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation is the second element of the vertical model. The model has been reviewed by 20 managers from different companies and the concept of the supervisor's role in the development of the organisation is a controversial one. Six of the managers disagree entirely with the concept as they believe that interpersonal trust in a supervisor is not associated with trust in the organisation. The analysis of this concept has therefore been divided into two sections: responses of managers who agree with the concept, and responses of those who disagree with the concept.

- *Supporting voices*

Fourteen managers who were interviewed said that the level of trust employees have in their organisation was typically influenced by the trustworthiness of their supervisor. This is because they believe their supervisor should be approachable and in some ways his behaviour represents the organisation. A Chinese manager describes his impressions of his supervisor as follows:

“To some extent, the supervisor represents the organisation. It is just like our president who works on behalf of Chinese people and his statements and actions impact on the impressions the world has of the Chinese. Supervisors are chosen by top managers. To some extent, the supervisor represents the organisation. Thus my trust in my supervisor impacts on my trust in the organisation.” (SC11)

In general, the 14 managers who agreed with the statement claim that their trust in the organisation was formed or reinforced predominantly by the level of trust they have in their supervisor. In addition, the management position of supervisors relates to their influence over the development of the organisation and is therefore considered to be an important element for the building of trust in the organisation. The director of the purchasing department in a JVE gave his opinion regarding the managerial level of supervisors:

“I feel that the position of the supervisor impacts on my trust in the organisation. For example: if my supervisor is a CEO, his decisions and thoughts can determine the future development of the organisation, thus the degree of trust in my supervisor has a larger impact on my trust in the organisation. However, if my supervisors’

management level is 11(which means he is in level 11 in the hierarchical structure), and his suggestions are not taken into account by the organisation, I think my trust in him only changes my view of the working environment.” (JC1)

Comments such as that above reflect the reports made by other managers who perceive that trust in supervisor alters the level of trust in the organisation, if their supervisor has a high level of management and can influence the growth of the organisation.

However, 6 out of the 20 managers pointed out that trust in organisation was not caused by level of trust in supervisor, the reasons for which will be demonstrated in the next section.

- *Non-supporting voices*

Those managers who did not agree with the connection between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation shown in the vertical model, highlighted that the behaviour of supervisors will not change the development of the organisation. A European director, working in a JVE said the following:

“My supervisor may be positive or negative maybe I don’t trust him at all. But it won’t impact on the overall picture of the organisation. He/she is only an exception. It might influence my mood, but not change my opinion of my organisation. The organisation is a sum of individuals, and it depends on individual behaviour, and the overall picture. The overall picture is created and generated by all the individual behaviours. If the overall picture is fine, but three or four individuals are not ok, you still trust your company. If you don’t have faith in the company, but you know some of the individuals are fine, it won’t change your opinion of the company. My supervisor is not the whole organisation; he is only a part of it.” (JN4)

In Chinese enterprises with more than 500 employees, the supervisor-subordinate relationship is not fixed due to frequent changes in posts. A Chinese manager suggested that this is a reason why employees do not struggle to work with supervisors who they can hardly trust:

“I have worked in this company for 31 years and do you know how many supervisors I have worked with? Ten, including my current

supervisor. So it means every three years I need to build a new supervisor-subordinate relationship. I have met some supervisors I like and some I don't like. And I trust the supervisors who are capable and supportive. But our interpersonal relationship and my trust in him won't change my attitude towards the organisation. The organisation has made great achievements both economically and politically, and I have a strong faith in its future, which has no relevance to my trust in my supervisor.” (SC12)

The high frequency of position changes does not only happen in SOEs but also in JVEs. A human resource manager in a JVE stated that:

“This is Joint Venture Company; we always change the general managers and directors. Managers in level three and above transfer their positions every 24 months. I only distrust the organisation when I find most of my colleagues or supervisors are not trustworthy. But this situation is impossible.” (JN4)

Six of the managers do not support the concept that trust in supervisor is related to organisational trust. In addition, they identify alternative reasons for trusting, or not trusting the organisation they work for. One of the interviewees discussed various elements of the organisation which they consider to be antecedents to trust in the organisation:

“Which variable can change your trust in the organisation? This question can be asked in your job interview, and rephrased as ‘why did you choose this company’? If you don't trust the company, are you going to work for them? [The interviewee shakes his head]. Before joining the company, you must check the finance report and reputation ranking, or probably ask existing employees for basic information in terms of salary, pay, benefits, working environment and work load. All the elements mentioned above could impact on your trust in the organisation.” (SC5)

In summary, the majority of the managers who were interviewed (14/20) agreed that there is a connection between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation. However, some interviewees thought that more elements should be taken into consideration when assessing the relationship. In some circumstances it was remarked that other variables have a much more significant impact on trust than the effect of the supervisor.

3. The relationship between trust in organisation and organisational commitment

The relationship between trust in organisation and organisational commitment is the last component embedded within the vertical model. Eighteen managers out of the 20 who were interviewed agree that trust in organisation is related to organisational commitment. An analysis of this concept revealed two sub-themes from the responses of interviewees which are; moral obligation, and other issues.

- *Moral obligation*

Interviewees said they commit themselves to an organisation which they trust, where employees at all levels including supervisors, subordinates and colleagues are considered trustworthy. SC4 in a SOE explains:

“Without doubt, the more trust I have in the organisation, the more commitment I give to the organisation. In such an organisation, I feel that my work is recognised and rewarded. My supervisor gives me 100% support and trust, and my co-workers are reliable. In such a harmonious working environment, I definitely have a higher level of organisational commitment.” (SC4)

However, two of the managers gave an opposing view. One of them considers commitment to be mandatory, and a requirement commanded by the organisation once a contract has been signed with them, and therefore they are ethically obliged to remain working at the organisation.

“In some cases, I admit that my commitment to the organisation would be improved if I have trust in the company, but from my personal understanding of the word ‘commitment’, I think it is a moral obligation that I have to put my effort into my job, which has nothing to do with my faith in the organisation.” (SC10).

The managers have identified two types of organisational commitment. The first manager contends that a satisfactory working environment, in which all the colleagues are supportive and trustworthy, has an impact on his emotional attachment with the organisation (affective commitment). On the other hand, the other two managers believed that their commitment to the organisation was a result of moral obligation (normative commitment), which is not related to the construct of trust in organisation.

- *Other issues*

Some of the managers proposed that trust in organisation is not the only variable to be associated with organisational commitment and suggested that more antecedents should be considered. One manager working in a SOE said that the effect of trust in organisation on commitment to the organisation is small. He added that the factors which influence commitment to an organisation are both internal and external:

“Organisational commitment can be affected by other issues, such as material items, personal achievement, recognition by the boss, individual education and personal perspectives of value. Employees consider their salary, working environment and respect from colleagues. If all the conditions are satisfied, they will work hard and commit to the organisation. But some employees are an exception; despite earning a large salary, they still lack responsibility, as well as commitment.” (SC12)

In summary, the hypothesis that trust in organisation is related to organisational commitment was supported by 18 of the 20 managers who were interviewed. However, those who disagreed highlighted that commitment is a moral obligation and a mandatory behaviour which is not influenced by the extent to which employees trust their organisation. Moreover, one of the managers added that internal factors such as personal education and self-recognition have more power than external factors such as monetary benefits in influencing employees' commit to the organisation.

Table 5-3 Summary of the vertical model evaluation

Vertical Model	Manager's views differing to the propositions of the model
Supervisory communication → Trust in supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antecedent and necessary condition • Communication style
Trust in supervisor → Trust in organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management level • Frequent change in posts
Trust in organisation → Organisational commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral obligation • Other influencing factors (internal and external)

5.2.2 Evaluation of the horizontal model

The horizontal model (see Figure 5-1) proposes the concept of the influence of co-workers' communication on employees trust in organisation and organisational commitment. It assumes that co-worker communication leads to trust in co-worker; trust in co-worker leads to trust in organisation; and trust in organisation improves organisational commitment. Table 5-2 shows the extent to which the managers who were interviewed agree with the concepts of the horizontal model.

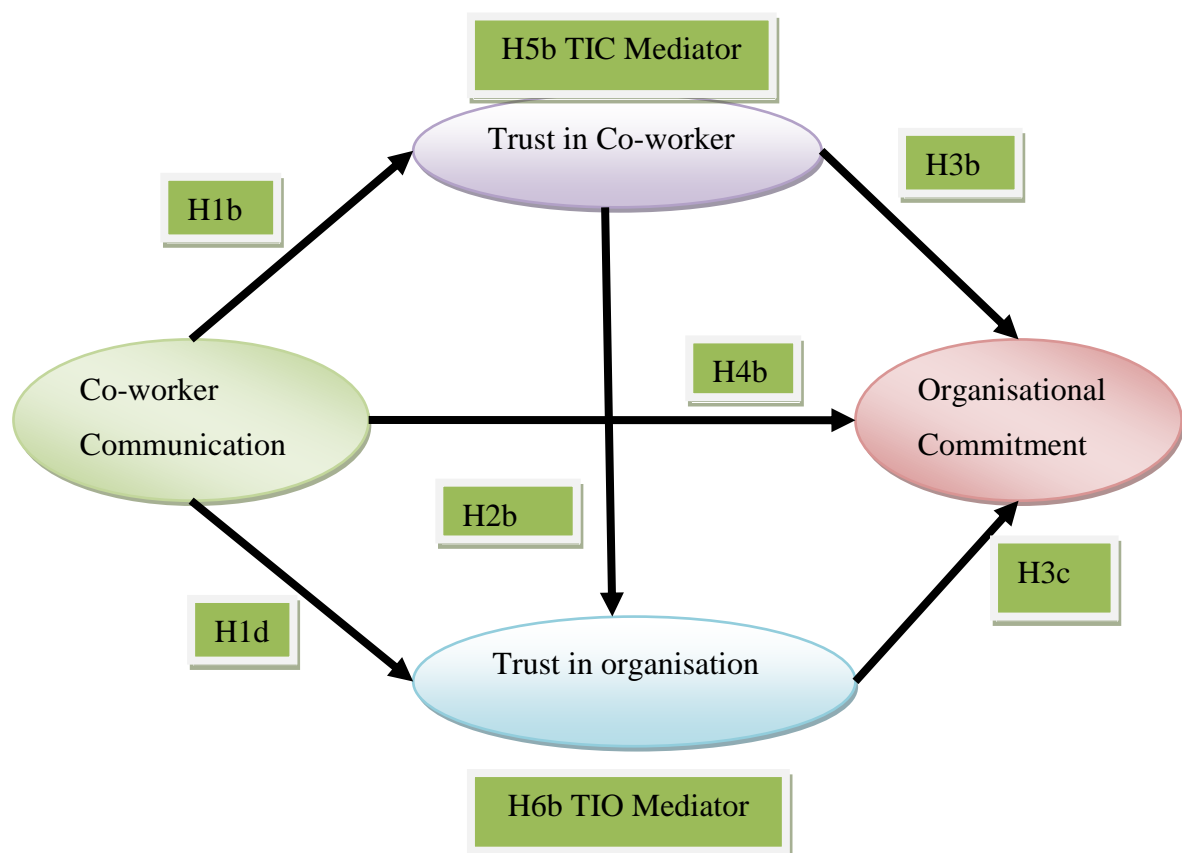


Figure 5-1 Hypothesised mediated Model 2- Interaction with co-worker

As shown in Table 5-4, 11 of the managers (55%) agreed entirely with the horizontal model. They agreed that communication with co-workers has a strong relationship with trust in co-workers, trust in organisation and organisational commitment which is important. However, 5 of the managers gave different opinions regarding some parts of the model and stated that they believe it only works in particular contexts. Four managers disagreed entirely with the horizontal model, and their perspectives will be explained further in the following sections.

Table 5-4 Agreement with horizontal model

Evaluation	Category	Frequency						Percentage of Total
		SOE1	SOE2	SOE3	JVE1	JVE2	Total	
Evaluation of horizontal model	Agree	2	2	2	2	3	11	55%
	Partially agree	1	2	0	1	1	5	25%
	Disagree	1	0	2	1	0	4	20%

As shown in Table 5-4, 11 of the managers (55%) agreed entirely with the horizontal model. They agreed that communication with co-workers has a strong relationship with trust in co-workers, trust in organisation and organisational commitment which is important. However, 5 of the managers gave different opinions regarding some parts of the model and stated that they believe it only works in particular contexts. Four managers disagreed entirely with the horizontal model, and their perspectives will be explained further in the following sections.

1. The relationship between co-worker communication and trust in co-worker

The relationship between co-worker communication and trust in co-worker is the first part of the horizontal model. A total of 11 managers out of 20 agreed that horizontal communication is connected with trust in co-worker. Following an analysis of this theme taken from the interviews, two sub-themes of this concept were revealed which are ‘type of information’, and ‘communication relationship’.

- *Type of information*

Managers who were interviewed pointed out the importance which the type of information provided by co-workers is to the level of trust in them. It was revealed that in conversations between peers, employees prefer to discuss personal life instead of work-related information and as a result, they feel a connection with each other, because of the characteristics and experiences which they have in common. A junior manager in a SOE claimed that personal topics increase the feeling of trust between him and his colleagues.

“I would claim that communication which only discusses worked-related problems cannot impact on personal trust. My conversations with my colleagues cover so many topics, such as football matches, family affairs, politics, and international business. Due to these things which we have in common, our interactions increase and trust relationships develop.” (SC11)

However, the research found that work-related topics are also one of the issues employees like to talk about. A Chinese manager with 29 years of work experience offered a new model that effective communication leads to high trust in co-workers but low trust in organisation:

“The content of the conversation needs to be considered when assessing the relationship between co-worker communication and trust in co-worker. Mutual trust between peers can be affected if the information being discussed is negative, such as criticism of the job. Because of self-esteem, trust relationships may be destroyed.” (JC5)

He also mentioned that the most destructive information is unfavourable and harmful messages regarding to the operation of the organisation, which are likely to damage employee confidence and trust in the organisation:

“In certain scenarios, horizontal communication is sufficient, whilst vertical communication is insufficient. Due to uncertainty and insurance, employees tend to trust malicious rumours spread by peers, such as organisational redundancies, position changes, wage reductions or cancellation of pensions. As a result, trust in co-workers increases, but organisational trust decreases.” (JC5)

In summary, the responses show that the type of information provided by colleagues plays an important role in building trust in co-workers. The interviewees also noted

that the trust relationship between co-workers is important to maintaining a trusting environment within the organisation. However, as a manager, the respondents feel that they should release any important information about the organisation for employees quickly, in case the trusting relationship between co-workers provides a channel for rumours and gossip against the organisation to be spread.

The next sub-theme emerged is the status of the communication relationship between co-workers.

- *Communication relationship*

The results of the interviews found that managers believe that the status of the relationship between co-workers can influence the feeling of trust. They feel that it is important for employees to become involved in social activities with their work colleagues.

“Our relationship with our supervisors is a working relationship, but our relationship with co-workers is more personal. We go out and have dinner together after work. Family parties are held occasionally. The more social activities we have, the more trust I have in my co-workers. But we won’t make friends with the supervisor, I trust my supervisor only based on their personal character, job performance and ability.” (SC5)

The managers who were interviewed agree that an emotion exchange between co-workers can be established through activities not related to work such as having dinner, playing games, or watching movies together, which involve more emotions and feelings. A German manager in a JVE explains how this relationship works to develop trust in co-workers:

“I think the impact which trust in co-worker has is less than the impact which trust in supervisor has on employees trust in the organisation, because communication between peers is informal , through which they can be friends. The content of vertical communication is mainly about work, but co-workers have different job responsibilities. We have some overlap, but not too much, thus we prefer to share the feelings of personal life and become friends. If we have the same hobbies, it helps to build trust between co-workers.” (SC6)

The managers also pointed out that actions such as helping to solve job related problems, cooperating at work, and communicating honestly with each other about problems are instrumental exchanges for the development of trust. Mr H, who is a top manager in a SOE, states that:

“My feelings of trust towards my colleagues are based on their working performance and expertise, not on their sense of humour or behaviour in social activities. Those co-workers who show cooperation and teamwork, or kindly remind me of my mistakes, deserve my respect and trust.” (SC7)

In summary, results showed that communication relationships, which are developed both at work and outside of work, are significant for increasing the formation of trust.

The next section will discuss the results of the interviews according to how managers perceive the relationship between trust in-workers and trust in organisation.

2. The relationship between trust in co-worker and trust in organisation

The interviews found that 11 managers believe there to be a connection between trust in co-worker and trust in organisation, because an organisation is comprised of individuals whose behaviours influence the overall picture of the organisation. The views of two of the managers on this topic are outlined below:

“Organisational trust is not very likely to be impacted by a few untrustworthy guys in the organisation. Feelings of trust are strongly related to personal behaviour. You cannot separate trust in organisation from trust in co-worker, because all the emotions are coming from the individual. The company itself cannot generate emotions. The behaviour, perceptions and character of employees create emotions.” (JN4)

“I believe that all my co-workers put a lot of effort into their jobs. We cooperate very well and I appreciate their contributions and capabilities. Last year, our division won the “excellent division” prize. I cannot find any reason not to trust my co-workers, and these co-workers definitely help me to create my trust in the organisation.” (JC1)

Although 11 of the managers agreed that trust in co-workers leads to trust in organisation, 9 of the managers disagreed, and argued that the effect of trust in co-

workers on predicting trust in organisation is very weak, especially compared to trust in supervisor. The opinions taken from the interviews have been divided into two sub-themes which are ‘number of co-workers’ and ‘job related or non-job related peers’.

- *Number of co-workers*

Employees have a large number of co-workers in comparison with the number of supervisors. Thus managers identified that whether they like most of their co-workers affects their perceptions of organisational trust. The opinions of two SOE managers are outlined below:

“I do agree that trust in co-worker leads to trust in organisation, but with a condition that the group of co-workers must be large. If I cannot trust the majority of my peers, how can I work in such an unpleasant and distrustful environment? In this case, my motivation and initiative reduce.” (SC8)

“A change in quantity leads to a change in quality of co-workers. If I trust most of the employees in the organisation, it won’t influence my trust in the organisation, but if most of the employees are not trustworthy, it will influence my trust in the organisation. I do believe our company has a very good culture and co-workers are trustworthy. If people at work are not trustworthy, everyone just focuses on their individual task, which destroys the organisational cohesion and reduces the reliance and faith which employees have in the organisation.” (SC7)

- *Job related or non-job related peers*

Peers work type was also mentioned as an element which influences the relationship between trust in co-workers and trust in organisation. Information from the interviews shows that managers divide their co-workers into two types; job-related peers (colleagues who must collaborate with each other to get their job done) and non-job related peers (where individual work performance is not relevant). It is noted that the feeling of trust for non-job related peers doesn’t change the manager’s judgement of the organisation.

“The impact of trust in co-workers on trust in organisation depends on the relevance of peers’ jobs. There are two circumstances: 1. Peers work together in a group, and their jobs are strongly related. If there is distrust the task cannot be finished, which may reduce

their trust in the organisation. 2. Peers jobs are not strongly related, and their performance is assessed individually. Any distrust between the peers will therefore not impact on their trust in the organisation or their commitment to the organisation.” (SC1)

“Communication between co-workers focuses more on personal issues, but the content of communication between supervisor and subordinates tends to be related to work. Judgement from your boss can directly impact your job satisfaction. And through communication, you can understand the expectations, requirements and views of your supervisor which help towards your work performance. Apart from simple work-related information, the role of communication with your co-workers does not influence your work performance directly, whereas communication with your supervisor does.” (SC1)

This is supported by the director of the purchasing department in a JVE, JC1 said:

“In our department, every employee is responsible for selecting and purchasing one material for the company. Jobs are not related and performance is only assessed by supervisors. There is no pressure to have a good relationship with my co-workers. The organisation’s reputation is good, and I was given professional career development guidance. My willingness to stay in the organisation won’t change.” (JC1)

In summary, the managers found that the amount of co-workers and working relationships with peers should be considered when assessing the relationship between trust in co-workers and trust in organisation. They also revealed that the influencing effect of trust in co-workers on organisational trust was not as significant as the influence of trust in supervisor.

Table 5-5 Summary of the horizontal model evaluation

Horizontal model	Manager’s views differing to the propositions of the model
Co-worker communication → trust in co-worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Trust in co-worker → trust in organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of co-workers • Job related or non-job related peers

5.3 Differences between SOEs and JVEs in organisational communication, trust and commitment

It is also very important to critically appraise the two main enterprise types (SOEs and JVEs) involved in this research as part of the evaluation of the models. Twelve managers out of the 20 interviewed have experiences in both SOEs and JVEs. Their perspectives provide rich information for comparing the human resource practices and the attitudes of employees of SOEs and JVEs. Although the other 8 managers only have experience working in a SOE, their opinions are valuable for understanding the differences between SOEs and JVEs in organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment.

The following section will identify the differences between organisational communication, trust and commitment in SOEs and JVEs by quoting the opinions taken from the 20 manager interviews.

5.3.1 Differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding supervisory communication

First of all, this study compared the differences in supervisory communication between SOEs and JVEs. Following analysis of the interview transcripts, five sub-themes emerged which are ‘cross-level communication’, ‘amount of information’, ‘feedback systems’, ‘communication channels’, and ‘direct or indirect communication style’.

- *Cross-level communication*

Supervisory communication involves two-way vertical communication and plays an important role in daily operation. With effective communication, not only can supervisor orders be transferred, but also employee suggestions can be reported. The managers who were interviewed indicated that JVEs appreciate advice and first-hand information from employees more than SOEs. Cross-level communication is conducted more frequently in JVEs than in SOEs. A Chinese manager from an SOE discussed the situation of cross-level communication:

“Cross-level communication is very important and can stimulate employee enthusiasm. Some supervisors are quite bureaucratic. Cross-level communication is more like a show than having any real purpose, which is to create a close relationship with subordinates and get to know information first-hand. However managers do not like to inspect employees’ performance and the communication is shallow. I do believe that only deep communication can get better solutions for the problems in the organisation and identify the pitfalls.” (SC7)

According to this manager, cross-level communication is poorly implemented in SOEs. Manager (SC6), who has recently been transferred back from a JVE to a SOE, indicated reasons for failure to operate cross-level communication:

“SOEs are resource and power orientated organisations. Managers are too superior to speak with subordinates, thus they rarely have an open dialogue with subordinates on an equal basis. On the other hand, if managers talk with the employees who are not their direct subordinates, which seems as an action in excess of authority. In Chinese culture, we don’t like others to point a finger at our job or interfere with our authority and we won’t be involved with others people’s affairs. Thus managers won’t talk to their affiliated subordinates without their direct supervisor, but this usually means that managers will not get the whole picture.” (SC6)

On the other hand, managers in JVEs talked about how they encourage and manage cross-level communication:

“There are likely to be some gaps and blocks in communication, so we hold employee meetings every week. We pick 5-6 first-line employees at random to attend the meetings for a free talk. Eating cookies, and drinking tea, they listen to my side without concern or pressure, we ask them to answer questions and provide their ideas. On the other hand, we give training and exercises to managers to help and provide direction for the appropriate way to communicate with their subordinates. This is an on-going activity which has achieved great results. I always keep my door open and try to listen to the first-line workers’ opinion in the absence of their manager or supervisor. Because if his/her supervisor is there, they won’t talk.” (JN8)

Another non-Chinese manager in a JVE described the encouraging climate of communication in his company:

“We arrange cross-level communication, trying to understand employees’ feelings, problems, or any other issues. I can tell people

like it, but this is unusual. Communication in senior manager level including our president is good, and low level communication between colleagues is quite open in some topics, for example salary, which is confidential, but they are willing to tell each other. The efficiency of communication does not only depend on one side, both sides need to make an effort. For example, we introduce new communication channels such as open dialogue; the CEO can discuss any issues with employees but if the employees are not providing any feedback, this would not work. We have also developed a communication corner in this building inviting everyone to talk. We have some magazines, coffee and a sofa in that room. But when there are 5 or 6 directors in that room, employees are afraid to go in so we must invite them inside. To conclude, I need to say for efficient communication, the first step must be taken by the management, and then the employees have to follow it, otherwise it will be difficult.” (JN3)

In summary, managers in SOEs and JVEs both realise the importance of cross-level communication to organisational development. It is needed to break down the barriers and allow smooth communication between different levels. However, due to cultural issues, the implementation of cross-level communication in JVEs and SOEs has achieved different results.

The next theme is about the amount of information shared in the organisation.

- *Amount of information*

The Amount of information transferred within an organisation is also an element which influences successful communication. “What information do the employees want to know?” and “what information the organisation can provide to employees” are two essential questions that managers should consider before they start communication. Managers in JVEs said that they are surrounded by large amounts of information, which can easily be obtained through several media. A human resource manager in a JVE stated that one of his key responsibilities was to provide the information to the employees, which makes employees feel like a vital part of the organisation:

“We have very detailed set on communication channels, media and dialogue, not only using upward or downward communication. We can get information from other functional departments or different levels. We use a lot of different media, such as newspapers, magazines and websites. I receive all the news, summaries and

highlights of the company every week. Some of them are unrelated to my job, but it is interesting to know what has been happening in the organisation.” (JN4)

Another manager in a JVE mentioned that there is a online communication platform in JVEs, where managers are quite open to share any experiences and problems which they meet. This is another way to understand the successes and mistakes of the organisation. In their perspective, the amount of information they receive is adequate for them to do the work and to understand the overall development of the organisation. However, managers in SOEs have different views. A Chinese manager from an SOE discussed the unsatisfactory results of a conference:

“There are many channels of communication in SOEs, especially when we adopt a new information system. But the results of conferences are less than in JVEs. This is because conferences in SOEs are procedural, mostly reporting the current process, while conferences in JVEs prefer employees to participate and discuss. I have to attend at least 6 hours of meetings per week, sometimes up to 14 hours. For me, it is too much, I am required to attend all the conferences, some of which are not related to my job. During the conferences, I just sit there and listen to the report. I don’t understand why they cannot just send me a summary of the meetings like the JVE did.” (SC3)

Eight out of 16 Chinese managers reported that attending conferences consumes too much time. Meanwhile, three Chinese managers highlighted that they believe there is not enough information transferred to low level employees. Manager (SC8) criticises his own performance of transferring information to his subordinates:

“The information I give to my subordinates is not enough, due to the fact that they come to me for information from time to time. There is so much information in my mind, but when passing it on face-to-face, I forget to tell them, and I cannot send the official documents to them because these are confidential and we need to avoid leaking information.” (SC8)

Two other managers also mentioned that low level employees were not adequately informed. The lower level employees can find out some information regarding organisational development through newspapers, the company website or TV stations, but information about the assessment of their performance, or how changes in the organisation will affect their work is not well explained to them.

In summary, the research found that managers in JVEs or managers who have previously worked for a JVE were satisfied with the amount of the information provided by their supervisor. In SOEs, managers receive too much information, and lack proper communication channels. In addition, they feel that the amount of work-related information for lower level employees is not sufficient.

The next sub-theme which emerged was the feedback system in JVEs and SOEs.

- *Feedback system*

The managers agreed that a two-way communication system is better than a one-way communication system and that the organisation should provide feedback to employees on their performance and encourage people to speak out. However in most cases, according to the descriptions given by managers, SOEs use a one-way communication approach. A Chinese manager compared his experiences in a SOE to those in a JVE:

“Communication in SOEs is one-way. When I am talking to my supervisor, either I just report my work progress or he gives me orders. I can seldom get written or oral feedback on my work, which means it is hard for me to improve. But in a JVE, employees have a chance to speak with their supervisor about their performance in person every year. The employees review will incorporate a discussion with their supervisor about their individual achievement of objectives and personal development. Firstly, supervisors and subordinates review the performance of the past year, covering performance against the objectives, and the capabilities which the subordinate has demonstrated. Then the review looks to the future, identifying priorities, specific individual objectives, development needs and career aspirations. Then human resource departments, according to the review, can establish a new salary and bonus structure, and personal career development plans for every employee.” (SC6)

Feedback can help employees to improve on their performance. A German manager at a JVE also mentioned that he believes the development of an organisation needs feedback from peers:

“In our company, we adopted a 360 degree feedback system. We appreciate all advice and suggestions. Peer feedback is very important and it helps us to improve performance and efficiency.

We want our peers to participate as they are important assets for the company and their contribution cannot be ignored.” (JN7)

In summary, the research found that systematic feedback is used in JVEs to inform employees about how they are being judged and how their performance is being appraised. Managers from SOEs, however, find that the feedback system in their company is not satisfactory, or complain that without a proper review of their performance, it is hard for them to improve.

The next sub-theme is communication channels which the research found to be different in SOEs and JVEs.

- *Communication channels*

It is important to clarify the priority target of supervisory communication in SOEs and JVEs before comparing the communication channels which are used. In SOEs, supervisory communication is a process which subordinates use to get permission from their supervisor. A human resource manager in a SOE said:

“A ‘check report’ is an important form of communication in state-owned enterprises. A ‘check report’ means you need to ask advice from your supervisor. According to the specific issues, you provide the proposal and solution to your supervisor, and get the permission to implement your plans. There are two ways to use a ‘check report’:
1. written communication where you write the proposal and plan on an official document, and ask for a signature from your supervisor.
2. Oral communication which includes face-to-face communication and telephone communication. In JVEs, they use email to get permission from their supervisors, but in SOEs, we prefer to use face-to-face communication.” (SC6)

He added to this the reason why SOEs prefer to use face-to-face communication:

“In Chinese culture, it is important to show your respect to your supervisor and face-to-face communication can achieve that. In SOEs, due to a lack of specific job descriptions and daily tasks, the permission of supervisors plays an important role in carrying out assignments. Subordinates are able to get timely feedback through face-to-face communication, which cannot be achieved by email.” (SC6)

The research found that in SOEs, 75% of managers prefer to use face-to-face communication, but the situation is quite different in JVEs. According to the managers interviewed, the primary objective of supervisory communication is to notify them of the current activities of their subordinates. Due to the awareness of job duties, Communication between employees and their supervisor focuses on the reporting of progress in their work journeys, which managers believe should be in the form of a written message to provide clear and streamlined information. A non-Chinese manager in a JVE stated that:

“I prefer to use email to keep my boss notified of my latest progress. It is convenient and without time or location constraints. My boss is Chinese so we do need a translator when we are using face-to-face communication, and some information may be misunderstood or lost. However, it is easier for me to use email, which is written in English and read it several times for clarification.” (JN4)

A Chinese manager in a SOE advocated that more email communication should be used:

“I used to work in a JVE where we prefer to use email to communicate. It is more efficient than face-to-face communication in terms of timeliness and location. When I delegate back to the SOE, I try to use email with my supervisor, but I never get a response. Email and written communication are important for formal communication as they are more time-effective. Face-to-face communication is much easier to get the real situation. However, with random conversations, it is hard to know if this type of communication achieves a decision or not and there are some limitations to individual authority. Sometimes, the problem cannot be decided by individuals, it may need board meetings, top management or a party committee to make a decision. Face-to-face communication limits the mobility of the information. The message will be distorted and lost in transfer.” (SC5)

In summary, there are more communication channels to choose from than ever before. In SOEs, there continues to be a bias in favour of face-to-face communication. 75% of managers in SOEs being interviewed concluded that the most successful managers exert their influence primarily in face-to-face interactions. However, all the JVE managers agreed that email is a convenient and efficient way of communicating with supervisors.

The next sub-theme is communication style.

- *Direct or indirect communication style*

Direct and indirect styles of communication are like a hammer and a screwdriver, both are helpful, but the right tool must be used at the right time. From the interviews, it can be concluded that employees in SOEs prefer indirect communication, while employees in JVEs prefer direct communication. Manager (SC5) in a SOE described the use of indirect communication when he has a conflicting opinion to his supervisor:

“When we have different thoughts to our supervisors, we will express our ideas indirectly. For example supervisors judge the issues by their previous experiences and information they have. Generally, it is right, but sometimes it is wrong. 1. If his decision directly disagrees with the current laws or regulations, we may tell him that this is not applicable. 2. If I do not agree with his idea, I may suggest to him to set up a conference to bring more decisive managers to discuss the issue.” (SC5)

SC6, who has worked both in a SOE and a JVE, said:

“Employees in SOEs consider more about “Guanxi (relationship), mianzi (face)” than work, and avoid speaking directly. In their minds, if they suggest something not consistent with the managers’ opinion, it will destroy the face of supervisor and in turn they may lose their jobs. The overall organisational atmosphere discourages employees from participating in decision-making or sharing their ideas.” (SC6)

Such an indirect style of communication style also can be found in JVEs. Non-Chinese managers in JVEs who were interviewed noted that Chinese employees prefer to use indirect communication. A Dutch manager said:

“It is interesting to find that Chinese employees speak in an indirect manner, not targeting the vital point. During meetings, most of the Chinese employees won’t express their ideas directly and stay quiet. ‘Maybe’ and ‘possible’ are words they often used. The Chinese culture does impact on communication. Normally, they are not straight forward. However, with some policy for encouraging it, the communication of Chinese employees in this company has changed and developed.” (JN8)

He also commented on the direct style of communication he uses with his supervisor:

“My supervisor has worked in the company for 6 years and he works with foreign delegators all the time, so he knows the German style of communicating. He accepts this way of being straight forward and focusing on the point. So we don’t need to have ambiguous communication, we just get straight to the point, which is a more Western style.”(JN8)

Another German manager pointed out the different communication styles he uses to deal with Chinese and non-Chinese colleagues:

“For the Chinese colleagues, I don’t speak so directly. I do not make my point the first time, maybe after several times. I can also go with that. This is a cultural issue. I can get feedback or information immediately, but I am not sure if this is the final answer. For non-Chinese colleagues, I can speak very directly. The German style is, if you have a question, you expect a direct answer if possible. If you come to a meeting, you expect to come out with the files or answers and solutions. That’s different from Chinese colleagues. I spend more time or have more meetings because I cannot get the answer directly. My experience is that if you have a question, and need somebody to do something, in most cases, it is impossible. The first answer is always “impossible!” “They have never done this before!” Second time you throw the same questions, they will say “it is very difficult!” the third time, they may say “it is possible, we can try!” After you realise that there are several stages there, you can do it. But at the beginning, it is very strange.” (JN6)

A German manager, who has worked in a JVE for 4 years, believes that indirect communication as a part of Chinese culture should be changed:

“90% of our staff are Chinese, including delegators. Now we have a modern culture, influenced by the Western culture of joint-venture partnerships. Maybe most people are influenced by the Asian Chinese culture. New colleagues who come from Germany or from Europe also have difficulty at the beginning to get along with the different way of acting. In Europe, if employees such as colleagues and subordinates have some issues and problems or are unsatisfied with the job, they will come to you. This is different from what happens here. People here expect that you can read their thoughts and they only open their minds when they decide to quit the job.” (JN3)

He added that the culture of indirect communication causes problems in JVEs, and so something needs to be done to change this:

“Communication between co-workers is a problem in our company, especially below the senior levels. If the CEO, general manager, director and all the senior staff do not show that they appreciate new ideas, or even come to complain about something, then you will never get any communication. So I introduced a meeting, one or two times a week, to bring the supervisors or engineers together in my office, so we can have a very confidential and open discussion about what we would like to change. I ask why they do not express their ideas, and they will say “you know the Chinese culture”. The culture issue is not the problem, but the problem is that the employees are aware of it and act that way. It is important for western managers understanding the differences of culture between our own countries and China. You can not expect or force people to adopt your way of working. On the other hand, Chinese employees need to know how to justify the culture; they should not act or behave in their normal pattern.” (JN3)

Six non-Chinese managers all realised that Chinese employees prefer the indirect communication style, which is different from the direct style of communication used in Western cultures. In JVEs, methods were introduced to encourage employees to participate and speak directly, and now the situation has been improved.

In summary, employees of JVEs are more likely to express directly, while employees of SOEs prefer the indirect style of communication. Managers interviewed mentioned that culture could be the one of the reason that Chinese employees are not willing to express themselves directly. The Chinese have a great respect for fixed hierarchical relationships. Employees in China are expected to show a certain respect for supervisors and accepting the obligations so as to maintain the hierarchical order. In addition, Chinese are comfortable with a considerable amount of silence and interpret the nonverbal means of communication, such as implied meanings, nonverbal cues, indirect statements and symbolic language when they are talking with their supervisors.

Table 5-6 sums up the differences between SOEs and JVEs in supervisory communication. The communication practices in JVEs are more welcomed by employees than SOEs. In JVEs, due to the cross-level communication initiatives, employees get more opportunities to have a private conversation with the directors in their department. All the advices and suggestions are appreciated, and instant feedback is also provided to employees to achieve better result. Employees in JVEs

could easily get information related to their work. While bureaucratic communication is applied in SOEs, where employees are struggle to work efficient with insufficient or excessive information. In managers' perspectives, culture inhibitions make it difficult for Chinese employees to express their views directly. On the basis of Confusion philosophy, Chinese are educated to respect supervisors, who are in the higher order in the hierarchical structure. It is rarely for Chinese employees say "no" directly in response to supervisors' request. Rather than valuing directness, the Chinese are more likely to be polite but vague. A higher value is placed on ambiguity and tact.

Table 5-6 Summary of the differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding supervisory communication

Supervisory communication type	SOEs	JVEs
Cross-level communication	Seldom used, but used in a bureaucratic way	Frequently used and in a democratic and friendly way
Amount of information	Insufficient or excessive amounts of information	Sufficient amounts of information
Feedback system	One-way communication is mandatory.	Two-way communication systems and 360 degree feedback systems are used
Communication channel	Preference for face-to-face communication	Preference for email communication
Communication style	Indirect	Direct and open

In the following section, horizontal communication in SOEs and JVEs will be compared.

5.3.2 Differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding co-worker communication

In this section, the differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding horizontal communication between co-workers will be investigated. An analysis of the interview transcripts on the topic of this theme revealed two sub-themes which are 'communication relationship' and 'organisational structure'.

- *Communication relationship*

Communication is not only a process for exchanging information but also a process for building, maintaining, or destroying relationships. The interviews conducted with managers revealed that communication relationship is an important function which influences the quality of communication. A manager from a SOE said:

“We have an equal and open relationship. We would like to negotiate and co-ordinate peacefully.” (SC6)

In SOEs, co-workers are encouraged to cultivate harmonious relationships, which in turn increase teamwork and cooperation. Managers, who have worked in JVEs and SOEs, felt that the relationship between co-workers has been given less attention in JVEs than in SOEs. A Chinese manager in a JVE said:

“In SOEs, we emphasise sharing working opinions and experiences. If we have good communication relationships, we can have good communication, and vice versa. In JVEs, the process is not shared.” (JC5)

Of those interviewed, 90% of managers believe that if they have a closer communication relationship, they are more open with their ideas and opinions. If co-workers are too competitive and will not speak to one other, their work efficiency will reduce without doubt. A German manager in a JVE agreed that a closer communication relationship can benefit the management of the organisation.

“I know Guanxi is part of Chinese culture, but I need clarify that it exists in every society including in Germany and America. There is no question that close Guanxi between co-workers may enhance the quality of communication and smooth the process of completing the task.” (JN3)

In his opinion, Guanxi among co-workers should be cultivated in the workplace, a concept which was accepted by the other five non-Chinese managers. After realising the importance of Guanxi among co-workers in China, JVEs started to organise non-job related activities such as sports and dinners to increase interaction among co-workers. A human resource manager at a JVE mentioned some of the activities that have taken place over the last year:

“We are human beings. If we have some activities together, we like each other, and then we have more communication with each other. You cannot only focus on the work relationship. In our company, we encourage people to have more interaction outside of work. Every Thursday, we organise a badminton game, and we also have an annual company sports competition, which enhances our relationship.” (JN4)

To summarise, the managers agree that the communication relationship between co-workers determines the result of communication. Establishing a closer communication relationship between co-workers has been important for a long time in SOEs. Managers in JVEs have started to make a conscious effort to encourage closer relationships between colleagues.

- *Organisational structure*

A vice-manager in human resources in a SOE found that organisational structure also helps explain the condition of communication between co-workers. The structure of both SOEs and JVEs is a matrix structure, however SOEs have a weak or functional matrix structure, while JVEs have a balanced or functional matrix structure. In a weak matrix structure, a project manager with only limited authority is assigned to oversee the cross-functional aspects of the project. The functional managers maintain control over their resources and project areas. In a balanced matrix structure, a project manager is assigned to oversee the project. Power is shared equally between the project manager and the functional managers. From the managers' perspective, it is difficult for him to obtain help from outside of his department:

“Peer communication in state-owned enterprises needs to be improved. In state-owned enterprises, communication between different departments has some restraints, but not in joint-venture enterprises in which all departments give mutual support. The organisational structure in JVEs is based on a “business process”, aiming to provide service to customers and shareholders. Human resources, financial management and equipment management departments are encouraged to co-operate with business and production departments. The structure of SOEs is a strong functional matrix structure. There is very low coordination between the departments. Once you have a problem, you need to gather people from different departments together to have a conference, where you can come to an agreement. As you can see, all the

departments are only focused on their own responsibility, which is the reason why efficiency in SOEs is very low.” (SC7)

From the above quotation, it can be seen that cross-department communication in SOEs is worse than that in JVEs. Another Chinese manager noted that when he worked in a JVE, he could get technical expertise and assign resources as needed from all functional departments:

“When one of the devices in my production was not working, I could call the engineering maintenance division to solve the problem. In just a few hours, the problem was solved. However, do you know how long it would take to solve the same problem in a SOE? You need to fill in the form, and ask someone to check it. Then wait for the arrangements to be made, the budget to be considered and approval obtained. The whole process may take at least 15 days on the condition that you have a good relationship with the manager in the division.” (SC8)

In summary, managers noted that organisational structure impacts on cross-departmental co-worker communication. The research found that compared with JVEs, SOEs need to improve the interaction and cooperation between colleagues in different departments.

Table 5-7 Summary of the differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding co-worker communication

Horizontal communication	SOE	JVE
Communication relationship	Close informal relationship	Based on instrumental relationship
Organisation structure (interdepartmental communication)	Weak/functional matrix structure	Balanced/functional matrix structure

5.3.3 Differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding trust

- *Job responsibilities in JVEs are clear, based on trust*

A trust environment is subject to the employees feelings towards the people working around them. Those managers who had experiences of working in both JVEs and

SOEs stated that the overall trust environment in a JVE was higher than that of a SOE. According to them, trust is defined by the empowerment and authority given to them by the organisation. 75% of managers believed that clear job responsibility in a JVE facilitates the formation of trust in the organisation. A Dutch manager in a JVE discussed how he feels about trust in SOEs:

“Subjectively, from what I can see, the atmosphere in SOEs is not trusting. Every decision needs to be reported up and employees wait for a long time to get a response. An atmosphere of trust depends on how much responsibility and empowerment is given to you by company guidelines and structure.”(JN8)

A general manager who is not Chinese also gave the same opinion that empowerment and responsibility are a benchmark for indicating how much trust is given to employees by the organisation:

“We have a clear division of responsibility, and I appreciate that we do not have too much communication. We have freedom and authority to make our own decisions without confirming every step, which might be necessary in solely Chinese companies. I receive empowerment, but I also give empowerment to my subordinates.” (JN7)

A Chinese manager in a JVE said he feels respected and trusted at work. JVEs incorporate “enterprise needs” with “employees’ individual expectations” to develop an individual training programme for the employees, and perceive every employee as a valuable asset to the organisation. This manager claims that with this reciprocity, employees endeavour to perform better:

“I would believe that we foster trust by empowerment, so you do not need to report every single item and you just need to do your job on your level. We try to give enough direction in terms of which decisions we need to be taken individually by the managers (subordinates) and which decisions need to be taken together with me. Formal job descriptions and informal communication builds trust in general. A formal job description means you know what your responsibilities are and the limit to what you can decide by yourself, and which kind of information you need to report to management for a decision. It has been clearly written in our company documents. We have guidelines and procedures, and every employee knows their personal tasks. I believe this is a kind of foundation for trust, but of course not the only thing.” (JC1)

Manager (SC10), who has worked in a JVE for three years, compared the trust environment in a JVE to that in a SOE:

“JVE: I trust the organisation. I believe its decisions and policy are right. I give it 9 out of 10. But it needs to consider how to maximise its use of resources and how to improve employee satisfaction. It has a high trust environment. Delegate and empower the employees reflect the high trust of the organisation on its employees. If not, it needs to find more supervisors to monitor the performance of employees. The efficacy here is high.

SOE: It has trust environment literature. But it is not the same as reality. This is because there are too many employees in a SOE so naturally, it develops an environment whereby everyone monitors each other. It is difficult to manage.” (SC10)

One of the Chinese managers also mentioned that JVEs place an emphasis on building an equal and open environment, in which employees feel free to talk. While the culture in SOEs is high power distance culture, thus employees are afraid to speak out or to expose vulnerability, which in turn decreases their trust in the organisation:

“SOEs are orientated around resources and power. The manager with a high position is powerful. In such a scenario, employees feel pressure to trust the organisation. On the other hand, JVEs advocate the development of a harmonious relationship.” (SC6)

In summary, interviewees stated that empowerment gives employees authority and a clear job responsibility in JVEs, which motivates them to trust the organisation. However, SOEs focus on controlling employees, rather than giving them the freedom to manage themselves, and as a result levels of trust in SOEs are not as high as in JVEs.

- *Social Culture*

Some of the managers who were interviewed pointed out that Chinese culture has changed in society and in Chinese enterprises. Social consciousness is based on doubt instead of trust. People have become more careful when they go shopping or to the doctor, because they are suspicious of unhealthy elements in the food or doctors who

provide unnecessary but expensive medicine for personal gain. Similarly, scepticism has also increased in people's opinions of organisations. Employees don't believe in senior management, while supervisors in the belief that employees are always laze and monitor subordinates' work constantly. A Chinese manager describes the trust environment in a SOE:

"Chinese culture and organisational culture are based on doubt, not on trust. Now these problems have been notified. In order to change the trust climate in the organisation, some of the rules and regulations have been transformed. If the employees' personal character and work quality are satisfactory, we are willing to empower them with more authority. If not, we are not confident to do so. State-owned enterprises in China have a unique culture, employees deem their jobs in the organisation to be an "iron rice bowl" or a "communal pot", meaning that employees lack initiative. In that way, we have to monitor performance of employees." (SC7)

The circumstances in JVEs are different from those in SOEs. In JVEs, the recruitment process not only considers the candidate's ability and expertise, but also whether their personal character is consistent with the company's culture. Employees are required to believe in and cooperate with co-workers in JVEs, where teamwork and trust is emphasised. A Chinese manager contrasted the trust environment of an SOE to that of a JVE:

"In a JVE, though we are all delegators, considering more about the individual profits of our mother company, we have a fair, sincere and open relationship. All communication is two-way. A SOE is a big organisation; supervisors do not trust their subordinates. My supervisor asks for information from my subordinate without notifying me. It is very common that supervisors interrupt the work of subordinates, which makes us very upset. And in SOEs, supervisors' behaviour is not consistent with what he says; what he says and what he thinks is always changing. Thus I would like to let the third party participate in our conversation when I am talking with supervisors, to make sure the content of our conversation has been witnessed." (SC10)

The manager said JVEs aim to develop people in such a way as to change most of their values and beliefs about the way they behave and work together.

In summary, the managers indicate that the culture of SOEs is influenced by Chinese culture, which is not based on trust. However, both Chinese and non-Chinese

managers in JVEs try to integrate modern Western management systems into the company culture to create an environment with high levels of trust.

Table 5-8 Summary of the differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding trust

Trust type	SOEs	JVEs
Job responsibility	Not clear	Clear
Social Culture	Based on doubt	Based on trust

5.3.4 Differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding organisational commitment

- *Normative communication in JVE, and affective commitment in SOE (humanised management)*

SOEs have three main responsibilities: social, economic and political. In terms of social responsibility, SOEs are required to establish a harmonious, caring and ethical organisational culture in pursuit of high job satisfaction and commitment for employees. Manager (SC7) noted that if an employee in a SOE is given responsibilities, this contributes to their pride and loyalty.

“SOEs need a competitive advantage, thus reformation is required to improve their efficiency. However, the government is focused on the development of harmony, and the improvement of efficiency is being ignored. Up until now, the competitive advantage of SOEs has been low. The only feeling of pride employees have comes from their social responsibility (i.e. they are able to see some official documents in advance).” (SC7)

Most employees in SOEs regard their jobs as permanent, thus they have a higher emotional attachment to the organisation than employees in JVEs. Manager (JC5) describes how employees in his SOE exert themselves to ensure the completion of tasks:

“Chinese workers are harder workers, especially those who work in SOEs. They volunteer to work during the weekends without pay in order to finish the task on time, which never happens in JVEs. There is the concept in every employee’s mind that “the enterprise is our home; its development depends on us.” (JC5)

According to this interviewee, SOEs give no clear job description or responsibilities to their employees and most of the jobs are assigned by supervisors, which employees endeavour to finish as soon as possible. In return, supervisors and organisations use humanised management systems to ensure the interests of employees are considered both at work and outside of work. A Chinese manager talked about how he feels about humanised management systems in a SOE:

“Our company advocated a humanised management system, which guarantees us freedom. I remember a time when my mum was in hospital, my supervisor immediately gave me a week off work to take care of her. People from the trade union also brought flowers and presents, and visited my mum, and allocated people to look after my mum in order to give me more time to rest, which was very touching.” (SC4)

In SOEs, trade unions often organise social activities such as parties, dinners or travel for the employees in such a way that employees develop a sense of belonging and identification with the organisation. On the other hand, JVEs adopt a robust management system to improve employee performance and productivity. JVEs provide career development and training courses for their employees. On the basis of reciprocity norm, employees have a feeling of obligation to remain with their organisation. One non-Chinese manager talked about this as follows:

“Integrating ‘performance review’ and ‘open dialogue’, we establish an individual career development plan for every employee. We provide opportunities for employees to participate in some training courses, as well as some foreign projects, in this way employees can improve their personal skills and capabilities. However, there are limited management positions in our company, so not everyone can get a promotion. Instead of promotion, we consider giving more authority to employees.” (SC6)

The interviews revealed that the salary in JVEs is as same as in SOEs. However, employees in JVEs have more freedom to develop, and tend to remain with the organisation due to feelings of ‘moral’ obligation.

In summary, the research found that cultural values in SOEs that emphasize the importance of group harmony, reciprocity, and loyalty are predecessors to affective commitment. Employees are committed to staying in a JVE, because the company invests resources in training and coaching employees, which gives employees a sense

of ethical obligation to respond with increased effort , and a desire to stay with the organization to 'repay the debt'. The research found that employees in SOEs have higher affective commitment, whilst those in JVEs have higher normative commitment.

Table 5-9 Summary of the differences between SOEs and JVEs regarding organisational commitment

Organisational commitment	SOEs	JVEs
Commitment dimensions	Higher affective commitment	Higher normative commitment

5.4 Summary

The interviews conducted with managers from JVEs and SOEs in China, revealed an evaluation of the modified vertical and horizontal models, which were initially proposed in chapter 4 and modified after quantitative analysis. Of the 20 managers interviewed, 14 agreed entirely with the vertical model, while 11 managers agreed entirely with the horizontal model. The different opinions taken from the interviews have been clarified and will be discussed in the next chapter. Managers also compared the elements of organisational communication, the trust environment and organisational commitment in SOEs and JVEs. This provided comprehensive explanations as to why the quantitative results showed significant differences between SOEs and JVEs. The qualitative in-depth interviews undertaken served to interpret the quantitative results, but also served as an evaluation of the proposed theoretical models. The next chapter will discuss the results of the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative interviews.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

6.0 Preamble

This study is the first to establish a model specifically demonstrating the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in both lateral and vertical directions. Six hypotheses were tested to examine the interrelationships among these variables. This chapter provides a review of the study's key findings obtained from qualitative and quantitative data, and demonstrates the similarities and differences between the present study and previous studies.

6.1 Interpretation of Findings

The main objective of this research was to propose and test a model linking organisational communication and organisational commitment, as well as to evaluate the potential mediating influence of trust in individual referents and trust in organisations in a population of employees in Chinese enterprises. All the original hypotheses formulated are supported except hypothesis 5b. This section demonstrates and discusses the key findings related to the six hypotheses, beginning by comparing the quantitative data gathered during current research with that from previous studies and following this with an explanation of how the qualitative data supports the hypotheses.

6.1.1 Organisational communication and trust

H1: Organisational communication is positively associated with individual trust

This study proposed that three dimensions of organisational communication were positively related to trust: adequacy of information, communication relationship and communication channels. This result is congruent with previous research (de Ridder 2006, Massey and Kyriazis 2007), which concluded that communication was effective in encouraging trust at both the individual and organisational level. Thomas et al. (2009) found that quality of information is the best predictor of trust with regard to communication among co-workers and supervisors; however, they did not explain

clearly what quality of information is. This study identified timeliness, multiple types of information, and that the quantity of this information could also affect trust, which extends the explanation concerning which kind of information, was necessary for employees to develop trust.

6.1.1.1 Supervisory communication and trust in supervisor

H1a: Supervisory communication is positively associated with trust in supervisor

The current research is the first study to examine three dimensions of communication including adequacy of information, communication relationship and communication channels and how they simultaneously affect trust in supervisor. The result showed that trust in supervisor is highly related to adequacy of information ($r=.745$, $p<.01$); communication relationship ($r=.628$, $p<.01$); communication channel ($r=.718$, $p<.01$).

The main aim of communication is to circulate information (Downs & Adrian 2004). This study considers three dimensions of adequacy of information: type of information, timing and load. Fourteen items were designated to measure this variable. “The amount of information about how my job-related problems are being handled” had the highest correlation with trust in supervisor, while “the amount of information about mistakes and failures of my organisation” had the lowest correlation with trust in supervisor. This clarifies those supervisors who are able to offer information about the immediate working environment of the employees involved will generally be considered to be trustworthy. Information related to major projects, the organisation’s financial situation and its failures might be perceived not so much as a benefit, but rather as a tactic to appraise group performance (Tremblay et al. 2010). Conversely, employees would lose their trust in supervisors who were unable to help subordinates solve problems or provide constructive and professional information on the job. This conclusion was supported by the results of interviews, in which managers expressed that open, proper and adequate information could reduce the uncertainty of employees, and reflects the ability of supervisors to deal with problems and provide professional guidelines to employees with their work. However, it is hard to reach consensus on defining “enough information”. A manager (JN3) believed that “enough information” should be judged by the receiver not by the sender. If the subordinates do not

complain, it means that they get adequate information, while if the subordinates disagree with the amount of the information, it means they either get too much or insufficient information, both of which inhibit effective job performance as well as their trust in supervisor.

The results showed that employees who feel easy and comfortable communicating with their supervisor are likely to have high levels of trust in supervisor, proving that a harmonious communication relationship between employee and management affects the trust relationship. Managers' communication ability and attitude presented during conversation with subordinates were of importance to the managers when they intended to enhance and maintain the trust relationship with their employees. The managers in the interview believed that supervisors who intend to control and command subordinates could not win the respect of their employees. Accordingly, when the supervisor values subordinates' contributions and accepts advice, employees are motivated to reciprocate by displaying stronger trust in their immediate supervisors.

Additionally, a rich communication medium made a great contribution to forming a trusting climate within the organisation. Quantitative results revealed that compared with telephone, letters and e-mail communication channels, face-to-face communication was the most important predictor to trust, which was consistent with the findings by Huang *et al.* (2008) that face-to-face communication has more comprehensive impact in terms of facilitating interpersonal trust building mechanisms. The choice of communication channels has an essential influence on employees' perception of their trust in the supervisor. Managers contend that when dealing with complex and emergent issues, face-to-face communication can achieve better results due to the fast response and supplementary nonverbal information. In addition, it provides an opportunity for employees to observe their supervisors' personal characteristics and leadership at close range, which allows employees to judge the extent to which they can trust their supervisors.

In summary, both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that effective supervisory communication, considering its three dimensions, communication relationship, adequacy of information and communication channel are positively associated with

trust in supervisor as this communication may well be interpreted by employees as a tangible sign of professional support and a chance to reduce the distance between them and their supervisors.

6.1.1.2 Co-worker communication and trust in co-worker

H1b: Co-worker communication is positively associated with trust in co-worker

The role of the co-worker in determining the overall working environment is significant, as peer relationships are more numerous than any other kind of relationship in the workplace (e.g. superior-subordinate). Previous research highlighted that positive peer relationships can provide a source of intrinsic reward for employees, buffer job-related stress and reduce job dissatisfaction and turnover (Kram and Isabella 1985). Scholars also suggested promoting trust at the peer level, as it is importance in improving employees' working attitude by increasing affective commitment and citizenship behaviour (Robinson and Morrison 1995, Tan and Tan 2000). Although the importance of co-worker or peer trust has been acknowledged (Ferres, Connell and Travaglione 2004, McAllister 1995), the matter of how to develop co-worker trust has not yet received systematic theoretical attention.

Thomas et al. (2009) found that the two dimensions of communication that were determinants of trust in co-worker were quality of information and quantity of the information. The current research expanded upon previous studies by not only looking at these aspects of communication, but by taking into consideration three other dimensions of communication; adequacy of information, communication relationship and communication channels, and determining how they affect trust in co-worker.

The current research found that trust in co-worker is highly related to adequacy of information ($r=.703$, $p<.01$), communication relationship ($r=.691$, $p<.01$), and communication channel ($r=.672$, $p<.01$). Within 10 questions related to adequacy of information, "the amount of information about my job duties" had the highest correlation with trust in co-worker, and "the amount of information about pay and benefits" had the lowest correlation with trust in co-worker. The results seem to suggest that direct guidance and help is more important, not that general information

about the organisation is intrinsically unimportant. The same result was also found in the interviews. Managers were of the opinion that non work-related information such as details about personal life, hobbies, and travel was discussed more frequently between co-workers than work-related issues. As a result, an intimate relationship was established. However, it is worthy to note the negative effect of horizontal communication on the development of a trusting environment within the organisation. When there is more information transferred through horizontal communication than vertical communication, this peer communication could cause damage that may go unnoticed as gossip and rumours of organisational redundancy, position change, and wage reduction that work against the organisation become widespread.

The quantitative results are consistent with what had been found in the connection with communication relationship, in that employees who are encouraging and speak frankly gained trust more easily. Managers being interviewed showed that they have more personal and closer relationships with other managers at the same level than their supervisors, because they felt freer and less stressful when talking with colleagues. In addition, one of the managers (SC7) pointed out that the ability of the colleagues including expertise at work and cooperation was taken into account to judge the trustworthiness of their peers and their personal characteristics such as humour behaviour in social activities were not the sole determinant elements of trust in colleagues. For example, if the colleague demonstrated poor cooperation and capability at work, he/she could not easily win the trust on the basis of his/her jokes during the party.

Extrapolating from the data, it appears that there may be significant opportunities to create trust in co-workers by adopting face-to-face communication and telephone communication. Currently, as technology is developing rapidly, email has been used in most Chinese enterprises; however, people still believe that physical interaction, such as face to face communication, is the most effective way to reduce metaphorical distance and foster trust between people, as it can provide more non-verbal information.

In summary, in both the vertical and the horizontal direction, communication was proved to be the forerunner of trust. Adequate information is more salient than

communication relationship or communication channels as it is related to both trust in supervisor and trust in co-worker. In other words, employees are more likely to be able to feel they can rely on those co-workers and supervisors who can deliver timely, relevant and enough information, and less likely to feel vulnerable in relation to them. In addition, the findings showed that effective supervisory communication triggers employees' trust in their organisation and that the magnitude of this effect is much bigger than peer communication in developing this aspect of trust. This indicates that the 'trust climate' within the organisation can also be beneficially affected by trust among peers; trust in the organisation itself is more down to the actions of managers. Managers have more responsibility in maintaining and sustaining the trust climate in the organisation.

6.1.2 Trust in individual referents and trust in organisation

H2: Individual trust is positively associated with trust in organisation

As hypothesised, this study found a positive relationship between trust in supervisor and trust in organisation ($r=.788$, $p<.01$), as well as between trust in co-worker and trust in organisation ($r=.628$, $p<.01$). These findings enhance the notion that trust in organisations is theoretically a global composite body of trust, in which trust in other referents in the organisation plays a significant role (Tan and Lim 2009). It is easier for employees to develop trust in individual people, such as their direct supervisor and colleagues, than it is for them to develop trust in the company as a whole. As the organisation is constituted of lots of networks, social influence and the individual effect of each supervisor can not be ignored. The finding of this study highlights that once a trusting relationship has developed between individuals (e.g. subordinates trust supervisor; worker trusts colleague), it influences employees' perception of the organisation. This should suggest to managers that a positive social system should be established in an organisation, encouraging employees to trust each other.

H2a: Trust in supervisor is positively associated with trust in organisation

The quantitative results corroborate the research which has observed links between trust in co-worker and trust in organisation (Tan and Tan 2000). Accordingly, when

the employees' evaluation of supervisor's behaviours and personality is healthy, their level of trust in organisation will be enhanced. Fourteen managers in the interviews agreed that trust in supervisor directly impacts on trust in organisation. This is because the supervisors picked by the top managers act and execute on behalf of the organisation. In addition, the trustworthiness of the supervisor whose management level is higher has more influence on the development of a trusting environment in the organisation. However, six managers in the interview disagreed that trust in supervisor is the cause of trust in organisation. The impact of individual behaviours and actions is limited when assessing the trustworthiness of the organisation. Because of the frequent change of positions in JVE and SOE, supervisor-subordinate relationship is not the main motivation for staying in the organisation. Instead, basic information about the organisation relating to the benefits package, career development plan and financial situation is the determinant of trust in the organisation. This result parallels the findings of Appelbaum et al. (2000) which showed that training opportunities, information sharing and performance-related compensation systems are positively linked to trust.

H2b: Trust in co-worker is positively associated with trust in organisation

Hypothesis 2b is supported by the quantitative result. The results revealed that trust in co-worker played an important role in developing the feeling of trust in organisation, which is in line with the empirical study of Tan and Tan (2000). Consistent with quantitative data, 11 out of 20 managers confirmed that there is a link between trust in co-worker and trust in organisation. Employees are more confident with the company when they perceive that the co-workers are cooperative and encouraging.

According to the results, trust in supervisor has a much stronger effect on trust in organisation than trust in co-worker does. This is because the supervisor is the most proximal person to the employees. In the daily work, supervisors deliver timely and accurate information about organisational policy, change and strategy to the employees. Simultaneously, employees' performance is judged by supervisors. From the employees' perspective, supervisors were perceived as representatives of the organisation (Wong et al., 2006). As such, a trusting relationship between supervisor-subordinates is more important than a trusting relationship between peers in

developing the overall trust climate in the organisation. The result was also supported by the managers in the interview. A manager (SC1) pointed out that having distrusting peers who are not involved in the same project or department would not change the employees' judgement of the organisation. In addition, managers (SC7 & SC8) indicated that the extent to which the organisation can be trusted also depends on the number of trustful employees. The organisational cohesion and teamwork would be destroyed if the majority of the peers were not trustworthy.

6.1.3 Trust and organisational commitment

H3: Trust is positively associated with organisational commitment

The findings support the proposition by trust and commitment scholars that trust significantly contributes to commitment (Aryee, Budhwar and Chen 2002a, Tan and Lim 2009). Among the multi-foci of trust, trust in organisation is the organisational-level that is more likely to predict organisational commitment. In individual trust, trust in supervisor is more associated with organisational commitment than trust in co-workers.

6.1.3.1 Trust in supervisor and organisational commitment

H3a: Trust in supervisor is positively associated with organisational commitment

Consistent with previous research, the findings revealed that trust in supervisor was positively related to organisational commitment ($r=.729$, $p<.01$), suggesting that employees are more likely to be committed to the organisation if they trust their supervisors. Previous research by Albrecht and Travaglione (2003) also found that trust in senior management influenced the extent to which employees felt emotionally committed to their organisations in two public-sector organisations.

This study expanded upon previous research by not only examining the relationship between trust in supervisor and affective commitment, but also taking into consideration normative commitment, which is one of three conceptualisations of organisational commitment in the most widely used model developed by Meyer and

Allen (1991). The result showed that the most significant relationship was between trust in supervisor and affective commitment ($r=.745$, $p<.01$), indicating employees would express a strong desire to associate with the organisation while they feel their supervisors are trustworthy. Compared with affective commitment, trust in supervisor showed less impact but was still significant over normative commitment ($r=.623$, $p<.01$). Normative commitment was defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) and refers to a belief that it is a morally right thing to be loyal to the organisation. According to the definition, the positive relationship can be explained in that the employee may become more loyal to the organisation on the condition that there is a trustful relationship between employees and their supervisors.

6.1.3.2 Trust in co-worker and organisational commitment

H3b: Trust in co-worker is positively associated with organisational commitment

Previous research has demonstrated that co-worker trust was a significant predictor of perceived organisational support, lowered turnover intention, and greater affective commitment (Ferres et al. 2004, Tan and Lim 2009). As expected, the findings in this study revealed that trust in co-worker was positively related to organisational commitment ($r=.588$, $p<.01$), indicating that employees are more likely to be emotionally attached and loyal to the organisation when trust in co-workers is evident.

6.1.3.3 Trust in organisation and organisational commitment

H3c: Trust in organisation is positively associated with organisational commitment

It is widely accepted in the literature that trust in organisation is a determinant of organisational commitment (Albrecht and Travaglione 2003, Cook and Wall 1980, Tan and Lim 2009). In line with previous research, the findings in this study provided evidence that trust in organisation is positively related to organisational commitment ($r=.848$, $p<.01$), demonstrating that employees who trust their organisations are more likely to be committed to their organisation. Relational trust should foster reciprocity of the same nature and reinforce the emotional bond. A higher level of trust in organisation will increase the assurance that they will fulfil their obligations in the future. Consequently, the bid on the future may lead employees to develop high

affective commitment. The qualitative results also support the link observed between trust in organisation and organisational commitment in previous research (Yang and Mossholder 2010). A manager (SC4) confirmed that he felt a strong emotional connection with his organisation where supervisors are supportive and trustworthy, co-workers are reliable and his work was recognised and rewarded. To date, most researchers have attempted to demonstrate that trust in organisation is positively related to affective commitment (Tan and Lim 2009; Yang and Mossholder 2010). However, little research was conducted to examine the relationship between trust in organisation and normative commitment. This research supports the link by demonstrating that trust in organisation could influence employees' normative commitment ($r=.774$, $p<.01$). Qualitative data suggested that commitment is a moral obligation and employees should exert to finish the work after signing contracts in which their responsibilities and tasks are identified clearly.

In summary, this is the first study that has explored the relationship between trust in supervisor and organisational commitment in conjunction with trust in co-worker and trust in organisation in Chinese organisations. The results demonstrated that trust both at individual and organisational level was highly related to organisational commitment both normative and affective. Trust in organisation has the highest correlation with organisational commitment, while trust in co-worker has the lowest, so it can be posited that trust at organisational level had more influence in developing employees' commitment. It is also noteworthy that the supervisor has more impact on employees' commitment than the co-worker.

6.1.4 Organisational communication and organisational commitment

H4: Organisational communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

The results showed there was a strong positive relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment. As such it can be stated that Chinese employees, who are more satisfied with communication, are more likely to be committed to their organisations and vice versa. It is necessary to note that this result holds similarities with previous research (Varona 1996, Vuuren, Jong and Seydel

2007). In the following section, two foci of organisational communication, supervisory communication and co-worker communication, and their connections with organisational commitment, are discussed separately.

6.1.4.1 Supervisory communication and organisational commitment

H4a: Supervisory communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

Consistent with the findings of Van Vuuren et al. (2007), the hypothesis in this research that “supervisory communication is positively related to organisational commitment” was supported. Moreover, supervisory communication and its three dimensions; adequate information, communication relationship and communication channels, studied in this research, strongly effect employees’ perceptions of an organisation and explained up to 57.5% of the variance in organisational commitment. In this study, among the three dimensions of communication, adequate information was found to be the most frequent supervisory communication predictor of commitment. Considering the adequacy of the information, three facets were included: the amount, the type and the timeliness of the information. The findings support the notion that employees who can obtain enough accurate, diverse, and timely information about organisational strategy and goals through communication with supervisors are more willing to commit to the organisation, as they feel respected and valued. Linking this observation with the fact that the next most frequent predictor was communication channels, one becomes aware of how important modern communication media is in generating commitment. In terms of communication relationship, it is less likely that relaxed communication and social activity after work could facilitate an increase in organisational commitment. In contrast, easy-going supervisors are more likely to enhance subordinates’ commitment by sharing their thoughts, opinions and feelings toward work.

6.1.4.2 Co-worker communication and organisational commitment

H4b: Co-worker communication is positively associated with organisational commitment

The results suggest that co-worker communication also strengthens the employees' commitment to the organisation. The good communication relationship shared between an employee and their co-workers may be considered a reason to stay with the organisation. An employee may feel the time and effort invested in developing a high quality peer relationship is too valuable to jeopardise if they consider leaving the organisation. Employees were more likely to get information about the organisation from their colleagues as they believed that supervisors might conceal real information from them, especially if it might have negative consequences for them.

It is interesting to note that the three dimensions of co-worker communication had a stronger predictive power on affective commitment than normative commitment. However, supervisory communication showed more predictive power for commitment than co-worker communication in this study, and this result is consistent with the report by Downs et al. (1996) in which they found supervisory communication emerged as a much greater predictor than any other factor. This study supported and extended the conclusions of Postmes et al. (2001), which showed vertical communication is more strongly related to commitment than horizontal communication is. The employees tend to be more committed to the organisation if they obtained adequate information to perform their tasks and if this information was transferred from their direct supervisors rather than their peers and proximate colleagues. Horizontal communication is supposedly more relevant to interpersonal relations than group cohesiveness and identification (Hogg 1992). However, the result is not in line with the finding of Varona (1996), which showed that co-worker communication is a better predictor of organisational commitment than supervisory communication. Because Varona's research was conducted in Guatemalan organisations, which operate in a different national culture to Chinese organisations, a possible explanation is that the impact of culture on the relationship is significant.

6.1.5 Mediating role of trust in individual referents

H5: Individual referent trust mediates the relationship between organisational communication and trust in organisation

As an important conceptual contribution of the present study, trust in individual referent has proved to be the mediator between organisational communications and trust in both vertical and horizontal models.

H5a: Trust in supervisor mediates the relationship between supervisory communication and trust in organisation

The pattern of findings reinforces the social exchange theory that the employee's trust in organisation is the reciprocal result of their receiving satisfactory supervisory communication, which engenders the employees' trust in their supervisors. Consistent with the prediction, trust in supervisor is the mediator in the relationship between supervisory communication and trust in organisation. Current knowledge suggests no previous research has tested how the mediating role of trust in supervisor operates between supervisory communication and trust in organisation. Current research supports the link observed in previous research between supervisory communication and trust in previous research (Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak 2001, Reina and Reina 2007). These findings suggest that satisfactory supervisory communication, through which adequate work-related information can be delivered by proper channels to employees, could improve the employees' trust in organisation when they perceived their supervisor can be trusted.

H5b: Trust in co-worker mediates the relationship between co-worker communication and trust in organisation

Hypothesis 5b, "trust in co-worker is the mediator of the relationship between co-worker communication and trust in organisation", was not supported. Satisfactory co-worker communication facilitates employees' trust in co-worker and trust in their organisation, however, the process of co-worker communication to enhance trust in organisation is not prior to trust in co-worker. Instead of a mediator, trust in co-

worker is more likely to be the moderator of the relationship. Co-worker communication may have its impact on trust in organisation primarily because employees obtained more work-related or organisation operation information and thereby this helps employees define and comprehend what their organisation is about. The level of trust in co-worker can assist employees' recognition of the information's reliability. For instance, when an employee gets information from his/her colleague that the organisation is going to increase salary for everyone, the employee will raise their faith in the organisation if he/she trusts in co-worker. But if he/she did not have a high level of trust in his/her peers, his/her trust in organisation will not be changed. However, while this outcome may occur in certain circumstances, it should be further investigated in different contexts.

H6: Trust in organisation mediates the relationship between individual referent trust and organisational commitment

The two sub-hypotheses 6a and 6b were both supported by the quantitative data. These results indicate that trust at individual level through the mechanisms of trust in organisation influence organisational commitment. In addition, managers confirmed the findings by emphasising the important role of supervisor and co-workers in the development of organisational networking.

H6a: Trust in organisation mediates the relationship between trust in supervisor and organisational commitment

Trust in organisation plays the mediating role between trust in supervisor and organisational commitment, which is congruent with the finding by Tan and Tan (2000). If employees perceive that their supervisor is authentic and reliable, and the supervisor's behaviour is consistent with his or her words, these positive indicators will be reciprocated in the form of a loyal attitude toward to the supervisor as well as the organisation. Managers also said that the supervisor played an important role in developing employees' involvement and identification with the organisation.

H6b: Trust in organisation mediates the relationship between trust in co-worker and organisational commitment

This research also found that the effect of the relationship between co-worker communication and organisational commitment is fully mediated by trust in organisation, which is in agreement with the findings of Tan and Lim (2009). Analyses revealed employees perceived involvement in social networks of co-workers as a source of work support, which should heighten the feeling of attachment.

6.1.6 The mediating role of trust in the workplace

As predicted, the findings revealed trust is the mediator between organisational communication and organisational commitment. Previous research has shown there was a mediator between organisational communication and commitment, such as the psychological contract (Guest and Conway 2002), personal-organisation fit and organisational efficacy (Vuuren et al. 2007). However, research examining the mediating role of trust between organisational communication and commitment has been limited. De Ridder (2006) published one of the few studies to have considered communication, trust in management and commitment simultaneously. However, the mediating role of trust has never been tested in both vertical and horizontal directions. The results of the present study further confirmed the indirect relationship between organisational communication and commitment. As one of the most important results in the vertical model, it was concluded that trust in supervisor and trust in organisation worked together as the compound mediator to the relationship between supervisory communication and organisational commitment. This result is in fact consistent with the findings of the research conducted by Zeffane, Tipu and Ryan (2011). In his findings, putting communication, trust and organisational commitment into an equation, commitment is the desired end product of the relationship, while trust is the centre of the equation and it is generated by true feelings of good communication amongst participants, including managers. Clearly, supervisory communication can improve organisational commitment when employees have strong faith in their supervisor and the future performance of the organisation.

This is the first research suggesting that the trust climate is the missing link between organisational communication and commitment. Furthermore, the findings not only confirm the importance of supervisory communication in the workplace, but more importantly also emphasise the impact such behaviour might have on social relationships and work outcomes. In social exchange theory, Blau (1964) posits that an individual's behaviour and actions influence the quality of the relationship between the parties involved in the situation. As a verification of social exchange theory, this research proved that when employees perceived high quality of communication with their supervisors on a day to day basis, they are more able to rely on their supervisors and more likely to trust the organisation, subsequently improving their commitment to the organisation.

6.2 Demographic differences

Research has proved that demographic features such as age, gender, and education levels are important in the Chinese context (Price and Fang 2002). However, there is a paucity of research concerning how demographic factors impact on organisational communication, trust and commitment. This section shows how the three variables were influenced by gender, age, education level, manager level and tenure in Chinese enterprises.

6.2.1 Demographic impact on organisational communication

Manager level had the strongest relationship with organisational communication. The results showed that employees with a high position were more satisfied with organisational communication. This might be because China is a society characterized by "Personalism" (Redding 1990) or rule by person rather than rule by law (Walder 1991), where people with high positions have more authority and dominate the organisation while employees at the bottom rarely have the chance to communicate with supervisors, and most of time just receive orders and accomplish tasks. In this study, it was found that the night shift workers had the lowest satisfaction with supervisory communication, which indicated that they did not receive enough information of high enough quality about the organisational policies and procedures

or perceive themselves to be in receipt of organisational support from their direct supervisor.

6.2.2 The impact of demographics on trust

The only demographic difference that affected trust in co-worker was age, with gender, education, manager level and tenure having no effect. The employees who were below 39 had higher levels of trust in co-worker, while employees who were older than 39 had the lower levels of trust in co-worker.

Gender had no differences in respect to trust in supervisor and trust in organisation. The results also revealed that young and more educated employees have more faith in their supervisors and organisation, while old and less educated employees expressed lower levels of trust in supervisor and organisation, which implies that supervisors should pay more attention to the old and less educated employees in order to increase their belief in the organisation.

6.2.3 The impact of demographics on organisational commitment

In terms of education level, Wang (2005) found that employees who were less educated were more committed to the organisation, while employees who were more educated were less committed to the organisation. However, this research revealed that employees with a higher educational background were more likely to be committed to the organisation, and especially that those who had masters or higher education felt more obligations to remain in the company. This is might because their further education is paid by the company; in return, they give more care to their work. Meanwhile, employees who were less educated were less committed to the organisation both emotionally and morally. This finding implies that organisations need to pay more attention to employees who are less educated in order to improve their level of commitment, because they may feel diminished and disvalued.

In terms of tenure, the findings revealed that the fresh and long-standing employees were more committed to the organisation. Particularly, employees who had worked in the company for 1-3 years had higher moral commitment to stay in the organisation.

Employees who had worked in the company for more than 10 years also showed greater commitment. This might be explained by the fact that most of them were not well educated and were looking toward retirement and receiving various benefits from the government (Qiao, Shaista and Wang 2009).

6.3 Comparison between SOEs and JVEs

How the findings relate to the extant literature was discussed previously. Additional debate on the impact of organisational type on employees' attitude deserves attention. In this section, how employees working in SOEs and JVEs perceive organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese organisations are described.

Before 1979, due to communist ideology and the politicised system of workplace control, employees endeavoured to work for a SOE, where their political rights, social status and economic interests could be ensured (Walder 1986). During that period, employees' attitude and behaviour were not considered by the employer. Meanwhile, employers did not reflect on their own implementation and practice of human resource management, because employees could not make any choices. However, since 1979, when the economic reform launched, SOEs gradually lost their prevalent advantages as they were no longer the only organisations in the market. Competent employees in SOEs flowed to JVEs due to the advanced human resource management. In 2000, in order to keep skilled workers, SOEs decided to change their human resource management in areas such as employee recruitment, performance appraisal and compensation practices.

The number and scale of operations of Sino-Western equity joint ventures in China has increased rapidly during the past two decades (Bjorkman and Lu 2001). JVEs transfer their advanced technologies and management expertise and at the same time they localise organisational culture by being concerned with Chinese national culture. As such, this increases the possibilities that Chinese employees will choose to work for JVEs, where the culture is easy to fit into and the wages and benefits are higher.

The differences of organisational support, human resource management, working conditions and organisational culture in SOEs and JVEs may influence employees'

attitudes and behaviours. The results in this study showed that SOEs and JVEs in China had significant differences in most dimensions of the three constructs.

6.3.1 Comparison between SOEs and JVEs regarding organisational communication

In the area of organisational communication, JVEs performed better than SOEs in all dimensions except the dimension of communication relationship with co-worker. This might be explained by the fact that majority of the employees in JVEs were Chinese, so there was no big difference in dealing with relationships with co-workers between JVEs and SOEs. As expected, the result indicates that employees in JVEs were more satisfied with organisational communication both in vertical and horizontal directions than in SOEs. This might be because JVEs adopted several actions to encourage employees expressing themselves to their supervisors. For example, the supervisor may invite employees randomly to have a casual conversation every month, in which employees speak about their ideas and perspectives without pressure, something rarely seen in SOEs. In addition, employees in JVEs got a chance to have an open and personal discussion with their supervisor about their performance at least twice a year, and professional and valuable suggestions were given by the supervisor, while in SOEs the supervisor may not have the time to communicate deeply with everyone due to the large numbers of employees.

Managers in the interviews also pointed out that although the SOEs advocate to use email instead of telephone and face to face communication, the usage of email is lower in SOEs than JVEs. Some of the supervisors in SOEs even refuse to respond to subordinates' email, which definitely destroys the timeliness of the information and delays work. Moreover, email is used in JVEs as record to report the progress of the work, which could reduce the time necessary for meetings and improve efficiency. In SOEs, the conversations between supervisors and subordinates were conducted frequently to resolve the working issues. But according to managers' descriptions, the outcome of the conversation is not very pleasant in most cases, because no one could properly recall the decisions made in the last conversation.

Managers in SOEs are requested to attend more conferences than those in JVEs, as they are even invited to participate in conferences unrelated to their jobs. As a result, the time for managers in SOEs to work is substantially reduced. In addition, conferences in SOEs, in which current process or new policy is reported, are quite procedural, while conferences in JVEs require employees to participate in decision making.

Due to *guanxi* (relationship) and *mianzi* (face), employees in SOEs will not give their suggestions directly when they find supervisors do not make the best decisions for the company. On the other hand, supervisors in SOEs are too superior to speak with subordinates. The majority of the conversations are one-way communication, in which supervisors allocate assignments to the employees. Contrary to this, employees in JVEs are encouraged to speak out and express their ideas. JVEs adopted a 360 degree feedback system to evaluate employees' performance and inspire employees to propose their expectations of what their organisation could achieve. Such two-way communication and encouraging policy in JVEs could well explain why JVEs got higher communication satisfaction than SOEs.

In terms of co-worker communication relationship, employees in JVEs stated that they preferred to maintain a purely instrumental relationship with their peers, who always perform professionally and perfectly during work. Co-workers both in the same and different departments are always supportive and cooperative when required. On the contrary, a lot of social activities were conducted in SOEs after work, such as dinner and badminton, during which closer personal relationships developed which enhanced the efficiency of communication. It is noteworthy that the impact of co-worker communication on trust and organisational commitment in JVEs is stronger than those in SOEs. The results proved that peers' ability, reflected from daily work and perceived as trustworthiness, should increase trust in organisation and employees' commitment to the organisation. Informal interactions with co-workers is a way to optimise the horizontal relationship, however the involvement in social networks of co-workers was not the key element of building a trusting environment and improving employees' commitment.

6.3.2 Comparison between SOEs and JVEs on trust

The findings also displayed that JVEs had higher levels of trust in supervisor, trust in co-worker and trust in organisation than SOEs. They reflected the fact that employees in JVEs had less vulnerability and were more likely to rely on their supervisors and co-workers. Meanwhile, employees in JVEs believed that their organisation had great prospects and high achievement under the current leadership. This can be explained by the fact JVEs have cultivated a harmonious and trustful environment, where every employee felt respected and taken care of. In contrast, employees in SOEs had lower level of trust, reflecting that they may be involved in a distrustful environment due to a lack of intimate and open communication.

It is necessary to point out that clear job responsibility also made a great contribution to trust. Managers revealed that formal job descriptions in JVEs, written to define the responsibility area for the employee in the contract, are the foundation for trust. The empowerment and freedom in the work motivates the employees and inspires their loyalty. However, due to their social responsibility, redundant employees are recruited by SOEs, where the job responsibilities are not clear and reasonable. Because the supervisors do not believe that the employees can finish their tasks in a short time, employees who are not working during the inspection are regarded as being slack. Such behaviour will strongly undermine the employees' trust in organisation.

6.3.3 Comparison between SOEs and JVEs on organisational commitment

Wang (2004) compared five dimensions of organisational commitment of Chinese employees in SOEs and JVEs. He concluded that there were no significant differences in affective and normative commitment between SOEs and JVEs. However, the results in this study demonstrated that employees in JVEs had higher levels of organisational commitment including affective commitment and normative commitment than in SOEs, indicating that employees in JVEs had a higher level of emotional attachment and obligation to the organisation.

Affective commitment was defined as emotional attachment to the organisation. Compared with JVEs, employees in SOEs worked in a more relaxed working

environment and felt less stressed due to the ambiguous responsibilities. However, the culture of “large power distance” still exists in today’s SOEs, where the workers’ rights, freedom and independence are greatly diminished, and may lead to a less positive view of life working for SOEs (Chiu 2002). On the contrary, JVEs advocated equality and fair treatment, and employees dared to express themselves and contribute to organisational development, leading to them feeling that they were an essential part of the organisation.

Normative commitment represents a sense of obligation to remain with the organisation. Research had showed that normative commitment may be caused by a particular kind of investment that the organisation makes in the employee (Scholl 1981). In the case of JVEs, where early training, education programmes and professional guidance were provided during the work; employees were more likely to maintain membership in the company. On the other hand, nowadays, not every employee in SOEs gets the opportunity to attend specialised training due to the limited resources and excessive employment. In addition, wages and benefits were lower in SOEs than JVEs; employees would like to leave without hesitation. This could explain why employees in JVEs have a higher level of normative commitment than those in SOEs.

To conclude, according the comparison between SOEs and JVEs it can be inferred that JVEs are more competitive than SOEs in terms of organisational communication, trust climate and employees’ commitment.

6.4 Summary

This chapter demonstrated the key and unique findings in the study of Chinese enterprises by comparing with previous studies. Consistent with previous studies, both vertical and horizontal communication make great contributions to employees' commitment in Chinese organisations. In addition, the impact of supervisory communication has more power than co-worker communication on organisational commitment.

Trust at both individual and organisational level is associated with organisational commitment and organisational communication. More specifically, this study has proved that the overall trust climate is the mediator between supervisory communication and organisational commitment. However, this relationship has not been found in the horizontal direction as Chinese employees do not believe that the influence of co-workers is as strong as that of supervisors on their confidence in organisational future and success.

At the end, it has argued that in Chinese JVEs, where more advanced management techniques have been adopted, employees' communication satisfaction and commitment to the organisation are higher than those in SOEs. This result is not in line with previous studies investigating the differences between JVEs and SOEs in China in relation to organisational commitment.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Preamble

This Chapter summarises the previous chapters, and will discuss the theoretical and practical implication of this research. Meanwhile, it identifies the limitations and provides future direction for human resource management (HRM) research and practices.

7.1 Summary

There is a lack of research investigating the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises, particularly in Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and joint venture enterprises (JVEs) settings. This thesis set out to develop a structured and comprehensive understanding of the contributions of communication practice, both at the vertical and horizontal level to employees' attitudes and behaviour within Chinese enterprises. It also aimed to produce a framework to measure the relative impact of communication issues on employees' psychological perspectives. It questions the performance of communication practices and their impact on employees' attitudes within five profitable Chinese enterprises through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources. This included a pilot study and a main study within which 843 questionnaire responses were examined. Twenty in-depth interviews were also conducted to validate the research results and findings of the quantitative data.

The first chapter of this thesis discussed the background to the research, and discussed the purpose of the research. By setting out the purpose of the study, the research aims, objectives and hypotheses were established, which led to the development of the methodological bases for the empirical work. Chapter 2 examined previous research in the field of trust, organisational communication and commitment. Based on this literature, a conceptual framework was established. Chapter 3 examined the possible methodological theories and introduced the philosophy, approach and strategies which were selected to achieve the aims and objectives of the research. Chapter 4 presented the results and findings of the research. Chapter 5 evaluated the 20 interviews with

managers in Chinese enterprises, and presented the modified model based on these. Chapter 6 discussed the findings of the research, and compared it to the findings of previous research.

This chapter will draw conclusions from the research, and demonstrate the extent to which the research aims, objectives and hypotheses have been met.

7.1.1 Purpose of the study and research questions

There is no doubt that solidarity among employees creates a strong organisation. However, managers encounter difficulties with uniting employees and facilitating their loyalty to the organisation. There is real and perceived low satisfaction with organisational communication among peers and supervisors in Chinese enterprises. This heightens the level of uncertainty in daily operation, ultimately impacting upon employee's psychological attachment and behaviour in the organisation. This makes Chinese organisations one of the most challenging environments in which to manage people effectively in order to ensure that they trust and commit to organisational success. Such communication dimensions present an adverse picture to the critical success factors portrayed in current management literature; adequate information, positive communication relationships, and appropriate communication channels.

Recently, more attention has been paid to the management of employees as they are the most creative and valuable components of the company. With regard to the more fierce competition both in local and international markets, the focus of managing the employment relationship has changed from compliance in employee behaviour to a more positive commitment. However, managers are struggling to find ways to improve employee's trust and encourage them to fully commit to the organisation. This issue has sparked vigorous debate among management in large corporations.

Little attention has been paid to exploring the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment both at the vertical and horizontal level. There is a need to examine and improve the understanding of which kinds of communication practice shape employee's trust and commitment, and what kind of trust relationship can make people more willing to commit to their organisation. Additionally, a better

understanding of how communication integrated with trust could improve employees' commitment is required. Organisational communication both at the vertical and horizontal level is crucial. Several studies have suggested the need for companies to strengthen communication practice and reduce the obstacles to the transfer of information. In addition, positive communication can develop and maintain employees' psychological attachment to their organisation. Therefore, it is worth exploring the status of organisational communication and its contribution to the level of trust and organisational commitment. Based on previous theoretical constructs and methodological instruments, the purpose of this study was to examine relationships between organisational communication, trust and commitment in five Chinese enterprises including SOEs and JVEs.

The aims of this research were:

1. To explore the relationships between organisational communication, trust and commitment
2. To develop systematic models of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment.

These aims were to be achieved by six specific objectives set within an integrated research design:

- a) To understand the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication and organisational commitment.
- b) To critically evaluate the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.
- c) To appraise the relationship between organisational communication and trust in Chinese enterprises.
- d) To assess the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.

- e) To develop and test of the relationship between trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.

Objectives a) to d) reviewed previous research which has investigated the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment, and examined the interactions between the three variables in the Chinese context in line with research aim one.

Objective e) developed a conceptual vertical model and horizontal model to demonstrate the interrelationship. Table 1-3 (section 1.2) correlated the aims and objectives to the research hypotheses. The hypotheses were then explored in detail in section 7.1.3.

7.1.2 Design and methodology

This study adopted a deductive approach by using surveys to test six hypotheses. A self-administered written questionnaire, incorporated with previously validated instruments, was administered to employees in three Chinese SOEs and two JVEs.

There were four parts in the questionnaire including demographic information, organisational communication satisfaction, perceptions of trust, and organisational commitment. In order to ensure high reliability and validity, the questionnaire survey was tested in the five Chinese companies prior to the administration of the main study. Chinese employees who were not familiar with English were the target participants, thus parallel translation was used to translate the questions from English to Chinese. The researcher and two Chinese PhD students from Coventry University translated and compared the different versions of the questionnaires to reach a common consensus.

In the pilot study stage, a questionnaire was utilised to collect data. Of 112 employee participants, 86 responded, resulting in a response rate of 76.7%. Due to low reliability, five items were removed from the questionnaire. An amended questionnaire with 71 items was therefore employed in the main study. Eventually, 757 out of 1300 copies handed out were returned, and included in the data analysis.

The data analysis consisted of a series of statistical techniques which were used including descriptive statistics, correlations analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, t test, analysis of variance and structural equation modelling (SEM). Two statistical software products including predictive analytics software (PASW) 18 and Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 18 were employed to analyse data.

Following the questionnaire stage, an interview stage was conducted whereby 20 managers chosen from the five target Chinese enterprises were invited to an interview. The focus on these interviews was for these managers to express their perspectives on organisational communication, trust and commitment respectively and simultaneously to provide validation to the modified models.

7.1.3 The fulfilment of the research hypotheses

Six hypotheses were outlined in chapter one (section 1.2). These guided the research process throughout the thesis. In chapter 2, organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment literature was explored in relation to these hypotheses. Following this, in chapter 3, the justified research design and methodology (Chapter 3) were developed to investigate the hypotheses. Next, the findings and results were discussed in chapters 4 and 5 in order to determine whether the hypotheses were supported or not.

The following section will assess the extent to which each of the six hypotheses are supported by the research.

The first hypothesis (H1) was that:

“Organisational communication is positively associated with individual referent trust.”

Chapter 2 investigated the theoretical grounds of organisational communication and trust. Section 2.3.6 developed hypothesis 1 (H1) based on previous studies. This hypothesis is supported by the data as presented in section 4.2.1. The correlation coefficient was positive and significant between supervisory communication and trust

in supervisor ($r=.781$, $p<.01$) and trust in organisation ($r=.787$, $p<.01$). While co-worker communication is positively related to trust in co-worker ($r=.794$, $p<.01$) and trust in organisation ($r=.701$, $p<.01$). The questionnaire results showed that communication practice can promote employee's trust building both at individual level and organisational level. The factors of communication, ranging from positive communication relationships, adequate and timely information to appropriate communication channels, when implemented suitably conveys to employees that they can rely on the people around them, and organisation they work in. The implementation of these factors should be tailored to individual employees so as to achieve maximum benefits for the company. In the interviews, 16 managers agreed that positive supervisory communication could improve the trust in supervisor, and that co-worker communication is a way to increase trust in co-worker.

The second hypothesis (H2):

“Individual referent trust is positively associated with trust in organisation.”

This is supported by data presented in section 4.2.1. The results showed that trust in organisation is positively associated with trust in supervisor ($r=.788$, $p<.01$), and trust in co-worker ($r=.628$, $p<.01$). Harmonious and positive personal relationships in the workplace are shown as an important element that is geared towards building an open, caring and trustworthy organisational culture. This result advocates that managers should carve out a niche for themselves by touting their expertise and personality in their daily work so as to win the respect and trust of employees. Since the research found that employees in China regard managers as representative of the organisation, their trust in supervisor could determine whether or not they remain in the organisation. The results also highlighted that the level of trust in co-worker needs to be considered. The impact of supportive and cooperative peers may result in a change in the level of trust in the organisation. The hypotheses were also supported by the results of the qualitative research. Fourteen managers expressed their opinion that trust in supervisor is the determining element of trust in organisation, while 11 managers agree that trust in co-worker is positively associated with trust in organisation.

The third hypothesis (H3):

“Trust is positively associated with organisational commitment.”

This is supported by data presented in section 4.2.1. The results show that organisational commitment is positively associated with trust in supervisor ($r=.729$, $p<.01$), trust in co-worker ($r=.588$, $p<.01$) and trust in organisation ($r=.848$, $p<.01$). Eighteen managers contend that trust in organisation is related to organisational commitment, of both the affective and normative type. Employees feel more comfortable working and staying in a friendly and trusting environment. When the organisation capitalises on an appropriate working process and practice based on trust, the extent of employee's emotional attachment and morale increase, encouraging them to stay in the organisation. This is because employees know that they would be well treated and catered for in the organisation both by their direct supervisors and by their peers. It is then easy for employees to develop a high sense of belonging, and feeling that all the decisions made by the organisation are optimum.

The fourth hypothesis (H4):

“Organisational communication is positively associated with organisational commitment.”

This hypothesis is supported by data presented in section 4.2.1. The results showed that organisational commitment is positively associated with supervisory communication ($r=.754$, $p<.01$), and co-worker communication ($r=.678$, $p<.01$). This pertains to the influences of organisational communication, in terms of communication relationship, adequate information and communication channels, on organisational commitment. This study revealed that increasing information sharing enhances employee's commitment and reduces the turnover rate of employees as they feel respected and valued. Conversely, employees feel uncertain and anxious when they receive a lack of information, particularly about organisational change, such as redundancy and business loss. HR department should promote communication channels, cultivating and encouraging a culture of information sharing and healthy communication relationships between the organisational actors.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) is:

“Individual referent trust mediates the relationship between organisational communication and trust in organisation.”

This is supported by data presented in section 4.2.2. Trust in supervisor was found to mediate 37.4% of the total effects of supervisory communication on trust in organisation. However, the data found that trust in co-worker is not the mediator between co-worker communication and trust in organisation.

An organisation should consider developing credibility by optimising information flow, managers’ communication skills, and providing various, convenient and modern communication channels.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) is:

“Trust in organisation mediates the relationship between individual referent trust and organisational commitment.”

This is supported by data presented in section 4.2.2. Trust in organisation was found to be the mediator of 85.5% of the total effect of trust in supervisor on organisational commitment. While 90.7% of the total effect of trust in co-worker on organisational commitment was found to be mediated by trust in organisation. This result reveals that trust in organisation is the missing variable between organisational commitment and individual trust. This leads to the conclusion that fostering a pleasant and trusting environment is paramount to improving employee’s commitment to the organisation.

7.1.4 The achievement of the research aims and objectives

Objectives a) to e) were achieved by section 7.1.3 where the research hypotheses were considered.. Research objective a) (to understand the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication and organisational commitment) was satisfied by chapter 2. Section 2.2.1 demonstrated that organisational communication is more than a process of sharing information through which organisational actors develop certain

relationships. Section 2.2.3 specifically demonstrated organisational communication to be a multidimensional construct that is highly related to trust (section 2.3.6). Trust, referring to the willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on belief of their trustworthiness (section 2.3.1), has been found to play an important role in building employee's commitment to the organisation (2.4.5).

Objective b) (to explore the relationship between organisational communication and organisational trust in Chinese enterprises), objective c) (to appraise the relationship between organisational communication and trust in Chinese enterprises) and objective d) (to assess the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises) were satisfied within section 4.2.1, which presented the findings and results of the questionnaires. This section showed that there is a strong connection between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.

Section 4.3 assessed the conceptual vertical model by using quantitative result. The results provided by AMOS software suggested that the model fit the data perfectly. In addition, according to the findings of the interviews with 20 managers, the vertical model is valid in both SOEs and JVEs in China. This section therefore fulfilled objective e).

Finally, section 4.4 compared the effect of demographic factors on organisational communication, trust and commitment in China. The results found that the employees' gender, age, tenure, management position and level of education influence the three constructs to different extents. This fulfilled the final objective f) (to measure the effect of demographic factors on trust, communication and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises).

7.2 Theoretical Implications

As the human resource management and organisational behaviour's interest on Chinese enterprises grew, this study identified key constructs including organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises and examined relationships among them, with the goal of systematically building and

subsequently testing a set of hypotheses. A significant and diverse body of literature considering Chinese human resource management has developed. This produced a need to consolidate certain assertions such as the concept of the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises. The uncertainty meant a need for empirical tests to resolve the questions about this relationship. In response to this, the results of this study provide additional support to the growing body of empirical literature on organisational communication and its interrelationship with trust and organisational commitment. It reiterates the importance of organisational communication, including supervisory and co-worker communication, in developing and maintaining psychological attachment such as trust and organisational commitment.

The major contribution of this study is the investigation of the direct and indirect contribution of organisational communication to commitment, which underlies the importance of satisfactory communication to the development of a trust environment in an organisation. This current study makes a specific contribution to the literature on trust in Chinese enterprises. In particular it offers a framework for determining high commitment levels in employees, where communication forms the underlying basis for all social exchange actions (Sarker et al. 2011). Using social exchange theory, this study revealed that trust played the mediating role in managing the relationship between organisational communication and organisational commitment. In particular, the results suggest that for trustworthy employees, supervisory communication can enhance their commitment to the organisation. Although the horizontal mediating model was not supported, the study did add some nuances to the literature underlying the model. For example, that trust in organisation is not the mediator between trust in co-worker and organisational commitment. Trust was tested as the mediating role in the relationship between supervisory communication and organisational commitment, this research enriches the knowledge of social exchange mechanisms.

This research is one of the few studies to have evaluated and compared the effect of organisational communication on trust and commitment in SOEs and JVEs in China. The results indicate that in both SOEs and JVEs, supervisory communication can stimulate greater organisational commitment if employees perceive the immediate supervisor and organisational climate to be trustful. Consequently, this research

manifested that employees are more satisfied regarding organisational communication, trust and commitment in JVEs than in SOEs. Thus this research contributes to a better understanding of Chinese human resource management and practices.

Plenty of research has shown the antecedents and consequences of organisational trust, but little has mentioned how trust can be built (Ferres 2002). One of the important contributions of this study to the existing theory surrounding trust is that, from the psychological perspective, it demonstrates how trust influences communication practice based on the three dimensions of the organisational communication including communication relationship, adequacy of information and communication channels. It also clarifies the role that trust plays within Chinese organisations by highlighting the point that trust holds an important position in enhancing the commitment of employees.

This was a cross-cultural empirical study testing the relationship between organisational communication, trust and commitment. It has tested the generalisability of the organisational behaviour theory, which was built and developed in Western countries, to an Asian context.

7.3 Practical Implications

Several practical implications can be recommended from this study. The results show evidence of specific links between supervisory communication, trust in supervisor, trust in organisation and organisational commitment. These links provide a path for understanding how managers can use communication skills to develop trust in the workplace and obtain high level of organisational commitment. The positive aspects of trust have implications for organisational leaders and human resource professionals, particularly in organisations with a large number of employees, matrix structure and multi-hierarchy structure. These kind of organisations require sufficient and effective communication for successful management, thus, the creation of a trust climate demands that the leaders and employees adopt appropriate communication, showing concern for their colleague's feelings, which reduces the likelihood of conflict and increases the commitment of employees (Daft 2002).

Due to the significance of employees having trust in their supervisors for determining their level of trust in organisation, and important outcomes like organisational commitment, this research has provided an alternative way for organisations to improve the effectiveness of their employees and ensure that talented employees are less inclined to leave. More and more research has found that positive contingent rewards, both monetary and non-monetary are strongly associated with organisational commitment (Podsakoff et al. 2006). Numerous studies also have concluded that for people with satisfactory salaries, some non-financial motivators are more effective than extra cash in building long-term employee engagement in most sectors, job functions, and business contexts (Gibbons 2006). Nowadays, there is an economic crisis in the worldwide. With its imperative to reduce costs and to balance short- and long-term performance effectively, the leaders in the company needs to reassess the combination of financial and non-financial incentives that will serve their companies best through and beyond the downturn. Especially, non-monetary incentive should be encouraged and carried out. Company bosses in China could implement forms of non-monetary rewards such as developing and embracing a climate of trust in the organisation to improve the level of employees' commitment.

Due to the positive relationship between organisational communication and trust, this research suggests that the development of trust be incorporated into new ways of considering management. Although the development and maintenance of trust is challenging, especially where existing levels of trust are low, trust can be managed and built, which is an important feature of organisational life and results in worthwhile outcomes. It may indeed be advantageous for senior management to evaluate which communication formats are best understood and accepted by employees, which in turn enables them to cultivate a culture that stimulates multi-foci of trust. Effective communication practices such as providing multiple types of work-related information on time, adopting different communication channels, and maintaining a harmonious and open communication relationship can establish high level of trust.

An employee's sense of belonging to the organisation does not primarily depend on the quality of their informal and socio-emotional interactions with peers and proximate colleagues, however, it is manifested that employees are more appreciative

of a quality communication relationship with their supervisors. The results of this study indicate the impact of trust in supervisor on trust in organisation is more important than trust in co-worker. It is, therefore, reasonable to suggest that managers in China should strive to win the trust of their subordinates by practising behaviours such as providing professional suggestions, showing genuine concern, and delivering promises.

This research found that levels of organisational communication, trust and commitment in JVEs are higher than in SOEs. Therefore, it is interesting to highlight the different communication practices used in SOEs and JVEs and its impact on trust and organisational commitment. The findings suggest that cross-level and two-way communication should be implemented in SOEs. Training courses could be implemented to improve the ability of supervisors to communicate effectively, such as knowing how to be a good listener, how to use email properly, how to control, alignment and development of interaction. In addition, supervisors in SOEs should not show superiority when talking with subordinates. In order to encourage employees to express their ideas, supervisor should come across as relaxed and patient.

Instead of supervision, certain authority and powers should be given to lower level employees in SOEs, because this is perceived as trust from the supervisor and the organisation. As reciprocity, employees are more likely to depend on the organisation and improve their relationship and involvement with the organisation. In order to achieve a high affective and normative commitment, organisational support such as 360 degree feedback, career development plans and annual performance reviews should also be provided in SOEs.

7.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Future work

This research was conducted in the context of the Chinese petrochemical enterprises in Jiangsu Province, which may present a limitation, as generalising the findings to other contexts should be done with caution. Future research can be conducted using the framework presented by this thesis, in the Western context, such as the UK or USA, to test the proposed relationship model between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment. In addition, research on the three-variable

relationships in different industries and regions of China are also recommended for further investigation.

The study adopted a cross-sectional approach, which is unable to address the dynamic processes of social exchange in general and may preclude the inference of causal relations. With the passage of time, the functional causal relations may operate conversely (e.g. organisational commitment leads to organisational communication). It is recommended that quasi-longitudinal design research methods should be implemented to track the developments in these relations. Because quasi-longitudinal can clarify the direction of relations between the intermediate variables.

Most of the data were collected by self-reporting, and personal bias may influence the outcomes of the research (Van Dijk 2004). This study adopted questionnaires as the main research methods, and it is therefore limited by the willingness of the participants to respond and provide accurate responses. Therefore, the extent to which the participants may or may not have sufficient knowledge to answer all the survey items or their responses become distorted due to personal biases, are the areas for potential errors in measurements. Future research could utilise multiple methodologies (e.g. ethnography and grounded theory) to collect further data from the perspective of the employees.

Additional limitations of the study include the use of a three-dimensional measurement of organisational communication. This study believed that adequate information; communication relationship and communication channels were the three most important aspects which contribute to organisational communication. Future studies may consider the use of additional dimensions such as organisational feedback systems to strengthen the measurement of organisational communication.

Finally, this study investigated a one-way relationship between communication, trust and commitment. Future research can be conducted to investigate the opposite direction relationship among them, for instance, organisational commitment leads to trust, which results in building effective communication.

7.5 Summary

This research is one of the few studies to have examined the effect of organisational communication on organisational commitment, and have tested two complex causal chains of exchange conditions. This research adopted a “multi approach”, including multi-foci of trust, multi-dimensions of communication and commitment, multi-level of organisational communication and multi-organisational types contributing to the literature.

The research enriches knowledge of organisational communication through identification of little researched variables such as communication relationship and adequacy of information. In addition, the research clarified how horizontal level and vertical level communication are linked to trust and commitment. Furthermore, the research adds to the trust literature by examining the trust in supervisor, trust in co-worker and trust in organisation simultaneously in a single study. The comparison between SOEs and JVEs on the three main variables increases the knowledge of Chinese human resource management. The key finding is that trust in supervisor and trust in organisation are compounded together as the mediator between supervisory communication and organisational commitment, which makes a valuable contribution to the social exchange mechanisms by adding the indirect linkage between organisational communication and organisational commitment.

The research also favours managers in China with valuable and applicable suggestions on how to enhance and improve the trust and commitment of employees to their organisation. Managers in China should be encouraged to practise behaviours such as showing genuine concern for subordinates and maintaining harmonious relationships. More work-related information such as professional guidance should be provided in the company. In terms of communication channels, rich communication channels should be used more frequently to enhance the supervisor-subordinates relationship. This research adopted a cross-sectional method; future research could use quasi-longitudinal design, which could draw a definitive conclusion on the relations of causality. For example, it is possible that commitment influences trust and organisational communication rather than the converse.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

Coventry University Ethics Committee

MEDIUM TO HIGH RISK RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL CHECKLIST

1 Project Information (Everyone)

Title of Project An investigation into the relationship between organisational communication, trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises
Name of Principal Investigator (PI) or Research or Professional Degree Student Xue Zhou
Faculty, Department or Institute [Engineering & Computing] EC Engineering Management
Names of Co-investigators (CIs) and their organisational affiliation N/A
How many additional research staff will be employed on the project? 0 Names and their organisational affiliation (if known) N/A
Proposed project start date (At least three months in the future) 28/09/2009
Estimated project end date 31/12/2012
Who is funding the project? my parents Has funding been confirmed? Yes
Code of ethical practice and conduct most relevant to your project: Social Research Association

Students Only

Degree being studied (MSc/MA by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD, etc)
Name of your Director of Studies or Project Supervisor Anthony Olomolaiye
Date of Enrolment:

2. Does this project need ethical approval?

Questions	Yes	No
Does the project involve collecting primary data from, or about, living human beings?	X	
Does the project involve analysing primary or unpublished data from, or about, living human beings?	X	
Does the project involve collecting or analysing primary or unpublished data about people who have recently died other than data that are already in the public domain?		X
Does the project involve collecting or analysing primary or unpublished data about or from organisations or agencies of any kind other than data that are already in the public domain?		X
Does the project involve research with non-human vertebrates in their natural settings or behavioural work involving invertebrate species not covered by the Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986)? ¹		X
Does the project place the participants or the researchers in a dangerous environment, risk of physical harm, psychological or emotional distress?		X
Does the nature of the project place the participant or researchers in a situation where they are at risk of investigation by the police or security services?		X
Does the project involve the researcher travelling outside the UK?	X	

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions, proceed to **Section 3**.

If you answered **No** to **all** these questions:

- You **do not** need to submit your project for peer ethical review and ethical approval.
- You should sign the Declaration in **Section 16** and keep a copy for your own records.
- Research Students must ask their Director of Studies to countersign the declaration and they should send a copy for your file to the Registry Research Unit.

¹ The Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986) was amended in 1993. As a result the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), as an invertebrate species, is now covered by the act.

3 Does the project require Criminal Records Bureau checks?

Questions	Yes	No
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with children or young people under 18 years of age?		X
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who have learning difficulties?		X
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who are infirm or physically disabled?		X
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults who are resident in social care or medical establishments?		X
Does the project involve direct contact by any member of the research team with adults in the custody of the criminal justice system?		X
Has a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check been stipulated as a condition of access to any source of data required for the project?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions, please:

- Explain the nature of the contact required and the circumstances in which contact will be made during the project.

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4 Is this project liable to scrutiny by external ethical review arrangements?

Questions	Yes	No
Has a favourable ethical opinion been given for this project by an external research ethics committee (e.g. social care, NHS or another University)?		X
Will this project be submitted for ethical approval to an external research ethics committee (e.g. social care, NHS or another University)?		X

If you answered **No** to **both** of these questions, please proceed to **Section 5**.

If you answered **Yes** to **either** of these questions:

- Sign the Declaration in **Section 16** and send a copy to the Registry Research Unit.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign the checklist before submitting it.

5 More detail about the project

<p>What are the aims and objectives of the project?</p> <p>The aims of this research are:</p> <p>To develop conceptual model of the relationship between organisational communication satisfaction, trust and organisational commitment.</p> <p>Accordingly, the research objectives are:</p> <p>A. To identify the underlying philosophy of organisational trust, communication satisfaction and organisational commitment.</p> <p>B. To explore the relationship between organisational communication satisfaction and organisational trust in Chinese enterprises.</p> <p>C. To explore the relationship between organisational trust and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.</p> <p>D. To develop and test systematic modelsof the relationship between trust, communication satisfaction and organisational commitment in Chinese enterprises.</p>
<p>Briefly describe the principal methods, the sources of data or evidence to be used and the number and type of research participants who will be recruited to the project.</p> <p>Questionnaire and Interview will be the principal methods to collect the data of the employees' perspective on organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises. All the process of the research will be done by the author herself. There will be 20 interviews and approximate 1300 surveys.</p>
<p>What research instrument(s), validated scales or methods will be used to collect data?</p> <p>Questionnaire investing the employees' perspective on organisational communication, trust and commitment in Chinese enterprises will be used to collect data. Twenty interviews will also be conducted in Chinese enterprises.</p>
<p>If you are using an externally validated research instrument, technique or research method, please specify.</p> <p>No</p>
<p>If you are not using an externally validated scale or research method, please attach a copy of the research instrument you will use to collect data. For example, a measurement scale, questionnaire, interview schedule, observation protocol for</p>

ethnographic work or, in the case of unstructured data collection, a topic list.

DELIVERY AND COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Title: Trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication satisfaction and commitment in Chinese enterprises

Conceptual definitions used for the study

1. Trust in the workplace: The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.
2. Organisational Communication: A social process of interaction and /or interpretation that gives sense and meaning to social reality, organisational actions, events and organisational roles and process.
3. Organisational Commitment: A high level of identification with an organisation's goals and values, willingness to exert extra effort for the benefit of the organisation, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.
4. Co-worker: A work colleague. May be colleague within your work group/department or in another work group/department. Not a supervisor or manager.
5. Supervisor: A leader in direct charge of the majority of your work focus who you report to as outlined in an organisational chart.

Survey instructions

Questions below are not a test. There is no right or wrong answer here. Please indicate your level of agreement by checking the number that best reflects your perception of yourself

There may be questions which appear irrelevant or impertinent. However, it is necessary in this

6 Confidentiality, security and retention of research data

Questions	Yes	No
Are there any reasons why you cannot guarantee the full security and confidentiality of any personal or confidential data collected for the project?		X
Is there a significant possibility that any of your participants, or people associated with them, could be directly or indirectly identified in the outputs from this project?		X
Is there a significant possibility that confidential information could be traced back to a specific organisation or agency as a result of the way you write up the results of the project?		X
Will any members of the project team retain any personal or confidential data at the end of the project, other than in fully anonymised form?		X
Will you or any member of the team intend to make use of any confidential information, knowledge, trade secrets obtained for any other purpose than this research project?		X

If you answered **No** to **all** of these questions:

- Explain how you will ensure the confidentiality and security of your research data, both during and after the project.

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the reasons why it is essential to breach normal research protocol regarding confidentiality, security and retention of research data.

7 Informed consent

Questions	Yes	No
Will all participants be fully informed why the project is being conducted and what their participation will involve and will this information be given before the project begins?	X	
Will every participant be asked to give written consent to participating in the project before it begins?	X	
Will all participants be fully informed about what data will be collected and what will be done with these data during and after the project?	X	
Will explicit consent be sought for audio, video or photographic recording of participants?	X	
Will every participant understand what rights they have not to take part, and/or to withdraw themselves and their data from the project if they do take part?	X	
Will every participant understand that they do not need to give you reasons for deciding not to take part or to withdraw themselves and their data from the project and that there will be no repercussions as a result?	X	
If the project involves deceiving or covert observation of participants, will you debrief them at the earliest possible opportunity?	X	

If you answered **Yes** to **all** these questions:

- Explain briefly how you will implement the informed consent scheme described in your answers.
- Attach copies of your participant information leaflet, informed consent form and participant debriefing leaflet (if required) as evidence of your plans.

The informed consent letter will be put in front of the questionnaires. All the participants will be informed that “by completing and returning the questionnaire you are agreeing to the information provided being used as part of this research study”.

If you answered **No** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why it is essential for the project to be conducted in a way that will not allow all participants the opportunity to exercise fully-informed consent.
- Explain how you propose to address the ethical issues arising from the absence of transparency.
- Attach copies of your participant information sheet and consent form as evidence of your plans.

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8 Risk of harm

Questions	Yes	No
Is there any significant risk that your project may lead to physical harm to participants or researchers?		X
Is there any significant risk that your project may lead to psychological or emotional distress to participants or researchers?		X
Is there any significant risk that your project may place the participants or the researchers in potentially dangerous situations or environments?		X
Is there any significant risk that your project may result in harm to the reputation of participants, researchers, their employers, or other persons or organisations?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the nature of the risks involved and why it is necessary for the participants or researchers to be exposed to such risks.
- Explain how you propose to assess, manage and mitigate any risks to participants or researchers.
- Explain the arrangements by which you will ensure that participants understand and consent to these risks.
- Explain the arrangements you will make to refer participants or researchers to sources of help if they are seriously distressed or harmed as a result of taking part in the project.
- Explain the arrangements for recording and reporting any adverse consequences of the research.

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9 Risk of disclosure of harm or potential harm

Questions	Yes	No
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence of previous criminal offences or their intention to commit criminal offences?		X
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence that children or vulnerable adults have or are being harmed or are at risk of harm?		X
Is there a significant risk that the project will lead participants to disclose evidence of serious risk of other types of harm?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why it is necessary to take the risks of potential or actual disclosure.
- Explain what actions you would take if such disclosures were to occur.
- Explain what advice you will take and from whom before taking these actions.
- Explain what information you will give participants about the possible consequences of disclosing information about criminal or serious risk of harm.

--

10 Payment of participants

Questions	Yes	No
Do you intend to offer participants cash payments or any other kind of inducements or compensation for taking part in your project?		X
Is there any significant possibility that such inducements will cause participants to consent to risks that they might not otherwise find acceptable?		X
Is there any significant possibility that the prospect of payment or other rewards will systematically skew the data provided by participants in any way?		X
Will you inform participants that accepting compensation or inducements does not negate their right to withdraw from the project?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the nature of the inducements or the amount of the payments that will be offered.
- Explain the reasons why it is necessary to offer payments.
- Explain why you consider it is ethically and methodologically acceptable to offer payments.

--

11 Capacity to give informed consent

Questions	Yes	No
Do you propose to recruit any participants who are under 18 years of age?		X
Do you propose to recruit any participants who have learning difficulties?		X
Do you propose to recruit any participants with communication difficulties including difficulties arising from limited facility with the English language?	X	
Do you propose to recruit any participants who are very elderly or infirm?		X
Do you propose to recruit any participants with mental health problems or other medical problems that may impair their cognitive abilities?		X
Do you propose to recruit any participants who may not be able to understand fully the nature of the research and the implications for them of participating in it?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **only the last two** questions, proceed to **Section 16** and then apply using the online NHS Research Ethics Committee approval form.

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of the **first four** questions:

- Explain how you will ensure that the interests and wishes of participants are understood and taken in to account.
- Explain how in the case of children the wishes of their parents or guardians are understood and taken into account.

Because all the participants are Chinese, a Chinese version questionnaire will be sent to make sure the participants understand their interests and questions properly.

12 Is participation genuinely voluntary?

Questions	Yes	No
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are employees or students of Coventry University or of organisation(s) that are formal collaborators in the project?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are employees recruited through other business, voluntary or public sector organisations?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are pupils or students recruited through educational institutions?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are clients recruited through voluntary or public services?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are living in residential communities or institutions?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are in-patients in a hospital or other medical establishment?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are recruited by virtue of their employment in the police or armed services?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who are being detained or sanctioned in the criminal justice system?		X
Are you proposing to recruit participants who may not feel empowered to refuse to participate in the research?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain how your participants will be recruited.
- Explain what steps you will take to ensure that participation in this project is genuinely voluntary.

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13 On-line and Internet Research

Questions	Yes	No
Will any part of your project involve collecting data by means of electronic media such as the Internet or e-mail?		X
Is there a significant possibility that the project will encourage children under 18 to access inappropriate websites or correspond with people who pose risk of harm?		X
Is there a significant possibility that the project will cause participants to become distressed or harmed in ways that may not be apparent to the researcher(s)?		X
Will the project incur risks of breaching participant confidentiality and anonymity that arise specifically from the use of electronic media?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain why you propose to use electronic media.
- Explain how you propose to address the risks associated with online/internet research.
- Ensure that your answers to the previous sections address any issues related to online research.

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14 Other ethical risks

Question	Yes	No
Are there any other ethical issues or risks of harm raised by your project that have not been covered by previous questions?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **this** question:

- Explain the nature of these ethical issues and risks.
- Explain why you need to incur these ethical issues and risks.
- Explain how you propose to deal with these ethical issues and risks.

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15 Research with non-human vertebrates²

Questions	Yes	No
Will any part of your project involve the study of animals in their natural habitat?		X
Will your project involve the recording of behaviour of animals in a non-natural setting that is outside the control of the researcher?		X
Will your field work involve any direct intervention other than recording the behaviour of the animals available for observation?		X
Is the species you plan to research endangered, locally rare or part of a sensitive ecosystem protected by legislation?		X
Is there any significant possibility that the welfare of the target species or those sharing the local environment/habitat will be detrimentally affected?		X
Is there any significant possibility that the habitat of the animals will be damaged by the project such that their health and survival will be endangered?		X
Will project work involve intervention work in a non-natural setting in relation to invertebrate species other than <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> ?		X

If you answered **Yes** to **any** of these questions:

- Explain the reasons for conducting the project in the way you propose and the academic benefits that will flow from it.
- Explain the nature of the risks to the animals and their habitat.
- Explain how you propose to assess, manage and mitigate these risks.

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² The Animals Scientific Procedures Act (1986) was amended in 1993. As a result the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), as an invertebrate species, is now covered by the act.

16 Blood Sampling / Human Tissue Analysis

Questions	Yes	No
Does your project involve blood sampling or human tissue analysis?		X
If your study involves blood samples or body fluids (e.g. urine, saliva) have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed (e.g. The British Association of Sport and Exercise Science Physiological Testing Guidelines (2007) or equivalent) and that they are in line with the level of risk?		
If your study involves human tissue other than blood and saliva have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed? (e.g. The Human Tissues Act, or equivalent) and that they are in line with the level of risk?		

If you answered **No** to **any** of these questions, please provide more information:

--

17 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION

Please ensure that you:

- Tick all the boxes below that are relevant to your project and sign this checklist.
- Students must get their Director of Studies to countersign this declaration.

<p>I believe that this project does not require research ethics peer review. I have completed Sections 1-2 and kept a copy for my own records. I realise I may be asked to provide a copy of this checklist at any time.</p>	
<p>I request that this project is exempt from internal research ethics peer review because it will be, or has been, reviewed by an external research ethics committee. I have completed Sections 1-4 and have attached/will attach a copy of the favourable ethical review issued by the external research ethics committee.</p> <p>Please give the name of the external research ethics committee here:</p> <p>Send to:</p> <p>Faculty of Engineering & Computing: ethics.ec@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Business, Environment & Society: ethics.bes@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Health & Life Sciences: ethics.hls@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>School of Art & Design: ethics.csad@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>School of Lifelong Learning: ethics.soll@coventry.ac.uk</p>	
<p>I request an ethics peer review and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly. Send to:</p> <p>Faculty of Engineering & Computing: ethics.ec@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Business, Environment & Society: ethics.bes@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Health & Life Sciences: ethics.hls@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>School of Art & Design: ethics.csad@coventry.ac.uk</p> <p>School of Lifelong Learning: ethics.soll@coventry.ac.uk</p>	X
<p>I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.</p>	X
<p>I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.</p>	
<p>I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.</p>	

Signatures

If you submit this checklist and any attachments by e-mail, you should type your name in the signature space. An email attachment sent from your University inbox will be assumed to have been signed electronically.

Principal Investigator

Signed: Xue Zhou (Principal Investigator or Student)

Date: 14/09/2012

Students submitting this checklist by email must append to it an email from their Director of Studies confirming that they are prepared to make the declaration above and to countersign this checklist. This email will be taken as an electronic countersignature.

Student's Director of Studies/Project Supervisor

Countersigned: Anthony Olomolaiye (Director of Studies)

Date: 17/09/2012

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Note: This checklist is based on an ethics approval form produce by Research Office of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University. Copyright is acknowledged.

Appendix B: participant information

**Informed Consent Agreement for delivery and collection questionnaire
(English version)**

**Informed Consent Agreement for delivery and collection questionnaire
(Chinese version)**

Informed Consent Agreement for employee interviewees (English version)

Informed Consent Agreement for employee interviewees (Chinese version)

Participant Invitation Letter

Informed Consent Agreement for delivery and collection questionnaire

Faculty of Engineering and Computing Science

Coventry University

Priory Street

Coventry

CV1 5FB

United Kingdom

Tel: [REDACTED], Mob: [REDACTED]

Email: aa8959@coventry.ac.uk

Trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment in Chinese Enterprises

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Xue Zhou, a PhD student in Engineering and Computing Faculty at Coventry University United Kingdom. This survey is based on an on-going research in University. The aim of the project is to investigate the relationship between trust, organisational communication and commitment in Chinese enterprises. The information that you provide will be kept anonymously and confidentially and used in aggregated summaries only for research purpose. By completing and returning the questionnaire you are agreeing to the information provided being used as part of this research study. I guarantee that your employer will never see your responses or be able to identify any individual from the information you provide.

The questionnaire should take you 15 minutes to complete. This questionnaire consists of four sections. It is very important that you respond to each and every statement. Only then can your opinions be included in the final analysis.

Your assistance and co-operation in this research programme would be welcome and gratefully received. If you would like a summary of the survey results, free of charge, please indicate on the last page of the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Xue Zhou

Researcher

送发问卷

研究题目：在中国公司中，信任是组织沟通和组织承诺关系中的调节器

尊敬的先生/女士：

您好，感谢您参与本次问卷调查。我的名字叫周雪，就读于英国考文垂大学工程及计算机学院的博士生。研究课题为在中国企业的工作场所中，信任度（包括对公司，对领导，对同事），组织沟通以及组织承诺之间的关系。

本次研究的目的是为了调查信任在组织沟通和组织承诺关系中的所起的作用。您会以匿名的方式参与本次调查，同时您所提供的信息会严格保密，不会向第三方公开，结果仅供本次学术研究所用。我在此向您保证您公司的领导不会看见您的回答，也不会从您提供的信息中认出您的个人信息。

本次问卷调查会占用您大概 15 分钟的时间。问卷分为四部分。您对每一题真实的回答及陈述对本次研究都是非常重要的，并能确保本次研究顺利完成。在您完成您的问卷后，我会亲自向您收回问卷。

对于您对这一调查活动的帮助和合作表示诚挚的感谢！如果您想要一份本次调查的结果，请在本次问卷的最后一页留下您的联系方式。

真诚的感谢！

周雪
工程及计算机学院
考文垂大学
普莱厄里街
考文垂
邮编：CV1 5FB
英国

英国手机：[REDACTED]，中国手机：[REDACTED]

电子邮件：aa8959@coventry.ac.uk

Informed Consent Agreement for employee interviewees

Faculty of Engineering and Computing Science
Coventry University
Priory Street
Coventry
CV1 5FB
United Kingdom

Tel: [REDACTED], Mob: [REDACTED]

Email: aa8959@coventry.ac.uk

Trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication and commitment in Chinese Enterprises

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am Xue Zhou, a PhD student in Engineering and Computing Faculty at Coventry University in United Kingdom. This survey is based on an on-going research project in University. The aim of the project is to investigate the relationship between trust, organisational communication and commitment in Chinese enterprises. The information that you provide will be kept anonymously and confidentially and used in aggregated summaries only for research purpose. You are agreeing to the information provided being used as part of this research study. I guarantee that your employer will never see your responses or be able to identify any individual from the information you provide.

The interview should take you 1 hour to complete. This interview consists of nine questions. All the questions will be sent to you ahead of the interview in order for you to prepare for you to know exactly what this study entails.

Your assistance and co-operation in this research programme would be welcome and gratefully received.

Sincerely,
Xue Zhou
Researcher

采访

研究题目：在中国公司中，信任是组织沟通和组织承诺关系中的调节器

您好：

感谢您参与本次问卷调查。我的名字叫周雪，是在英国考文垂大学工程及计算机学院的博士生。我研究的课题是中国企业中的工作场所中的信任（包括对公司，对领导，对同事），组织沟通以及组织承诺之间的关系。

本次研究的目的地是为了调查信任在组织沟通和组织承诺关系中的起的调节作用。您会以匿名的方式参与本次调查，同时您所提供的信息会严格保密，不会向第三方公开，结果仅供本次学术研究所用。我在此向您保证您公司的领导不会看见您的回答，也不会从您提供的信息中认出您的个人信息。

本次采访会大概占用您一个小时的时间。该采访共会有八个问题。所有问题我会在采访之前发给您，以便您提前准备。

对于您对这一调查活动的帮助和合作，我表示诚挚的感谢！如果您需要一份本次调查的结果，请在本次采访的最后留下您的联系方式。

真诚的感谢！

周雪
工程及计算机学院
考文垂大学
普莱厄里街
考文垂
邮编：CV1 5FB
英国

英国手机：[REDACTED]；中国手机：[REDACTED]

电子邮件：aa8959@coventry.ac.uk

Invitation Letter for interviewees

My name is Xue Zhou, a Ph. D student majoring in Engineering and Computing Faculty at Coventry University in UK. I am conducting a research on the relationship between organisational communication satisfaction and organisational commitment through trust in the organisation, supervisors and co-workers. I would like to interview you about your firm's organisational communication, trust and commitment, in the same time I would like to know what your philosophy is about this relationship.

The interview would take no more than an hour and I'm happy to schedule it at your convenience, either in-person or on the phone. I'm also happy to send you the list of questions ahead of time in order for you to know exactly what this study entails. I'm hoping that you'll have time early **this spring** to participant in the interview.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at aa8959@coventry.ac.uk or

██████████

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Xue Zhou

Faculty of Engineering and Computing Science

Coventry University

Priory Street

Coventry

CV1 5FB

United Kingdom

Tel: ██████████ Mob: ██████████

Email: aa8959@coventry.ac.uk

APPENDIX C: QUANTITATIVE MATERIALS

**Survey for Organisational Communication, Trust and Organisational
Commitment (English version)**

**Survey for Organisational Communication, Trust and Organisational
Commitment (Chinese version)**

Survey for Organisational Communication, Trust and Organisational Commitment (English version)

DELIVERY AND COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Title: Trust as a mediator of the relationship between organisational communication satisfaction and commitment in Chinese enterprises

Conceptual definitions used for the study

- **Trust in the workplace:** The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.
- **Organisational Communication:** A social process of interaction and /or interpretation that gives sense and meaning to social reality, organisational actions, events and organisational roles and process.
- **Organisational Commitment:** A high level of identification with an organisation's goals and values, willingness to exert extra effort for the benefit of the organisation, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.
- **Co-worker:** A work colleague. May be colleague within your work group/department or in another work group/department. Not a supervisor or manager.
- **Supervisor:** A leader in direct charge of the majority of your work focus who you report to as outlined in an organisational chart.

Survey instructions

- ✚ Questions below are not a test. There is no right or wrong answer here. Please indicate your level of agreement by checking the number that best reflects your perception of yourself
- ✚ There may be questions which appear irrelevant or impertinent. However, it is necessary in this study that all questions are answered, as the questionnaire is designed to achieve particular research objectives, and it is hoped not to offend respondents in any way. If there are questions which you are unwilling or unable to answer, skip them and continue answering the remainder of the questions
- ✚ Remember that both your identity and that of the company you work for will remain strictly confidential
- ✚ **Please send the completed questionnaire to the researcher as soon as you finish**

PART ONE-General Information

Respondent Details:

Following questions are to obtain demographic information about you. Please tick the item that best describes you

1. What is your gender?

- 1) Male 2)Female

2. What is your age?

- 1) Under 29 years old
- 2) 29-39 years old
- 3) 40-49 years old
- 4) Over 50 years old

3. What is your highest level of education

- 1) High school diploma
- 2) Three-year college degree
- 3) Four-year college degree
- 4) Graduate school degree (Master, Doctor)

4. How long have you worked for this organisation?

- 1) 1 to 3 years
- 2) 3 to 5 years
- 3) 5 to 7 years
- 4) 7 to 10 years
- 5) Over ten years

5. What is your management level?

- 1) Normal Workers
- 2) Medium manager level
- 3) Top manager level

PART TWO-Organisational communication issue in the workplace

Next questions are to obtain your perception of organisational communication toward your organisation. Please indicate your level of agreement by checking the number that best reflects your perception of yourself.

A. Please indicate how agreeable you are with the following by circling the appropriate number at right.

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

Communication relationship (Guanxi) with <u>immediate supervisor</u>	Extent of agreement				
1. My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward work and life	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
3. After office hours, I have social activities together with my supervisor, such as having dinner together or having entertainment together, which go beyond work duties	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am familiar with the family members of my supervisor and have personal contact with these members	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am willing to obey my supervisor unconditionally	1	2	3	4	5
6. While I disagree with my supervisor, I would still support his/her decisions.	1	2	3	4	5

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

Communication relationship (Guanxi) with <u>co-worker</u>	Extent of agreement				
7. My colleagues helped me solving work related problems.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My colleagues kindly reminded me when he/she found the mistakes I made in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My colleagues encouraged my work.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My colleagues cooperated well with me at work.	1	2	3	4	5

11. My colleagues communicated with me frankly at work.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My colleagues interact/relate after work.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My colleagues helped me with problems in my personal life.	1	2	3	4	5

B. Indicate the extent to which information from the following sources is usually timely

Meaning of scale: 5(very timely), 4(timely), 3(neutral), 2(untimely), 1(very untimely)

Objectives	Level of timely				
1. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your co-workers ?	1	2	3	4	5
2. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your supervisor ?	1	2	3	4	5

C. Listed below are several kinds of information often associated with a person's job. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount and/or quality of each kind of information by circling the appropriate number at the right.

Meaning of scale: 5(Very satisfactory), 4(satisfactory), 3(neutral), 2(Dissatisfactory), 1(Very dissatisfactory)

Satisfactory with the <u>amount</u> of information I receive from <u>my supervisor</u>	Extent of satisfactory				
1. How well I am doing my job	1	2	3	4	5
2. My job duties	1	2	3	4	5
3. Organisational policies	1	2	3	4	5
4. Pay and benefits	1	2	3	4	5
5. How technological changes affect my jobs	1	2	3	4	5
6. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
7. How I am being judged	1	2	3	4	5
8. How my job-related problems are being handled	1	2	3	4	5
9. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	1	2	3	4	5

10. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
11. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
12. How my job relates to the total operation of my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
13. Specific problems faced by management	1	2	3	4	5

Meaning of scale: 5(Very satisfactory), 4(satisfactory), 3(neutral), 2(Dissatisfactory), 1(Very dissatisfactory)

Satisfactory with the <u>amount</u> of information I receive from <u>co-workers</u>	Extent of satisfactory				
14. My job duties	1	2	3	4	5
15. Organisational policies	1	2	3	4	5
16. Pay and benefits	1	2	3	4	5
17. How technological changes affect my jobs	1	2	3	4	5
18. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
19. How my job-related problems are being handled	1	2	3	4	5
20. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	1	2	3	4	5
21. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
22. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
23. Specific problems faced by management	1	2	3	4	5

- D. List below are a variety of channels through which messages are transmitted. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount of information you receive through that channel by circling the appropriate number at the right.

Meaning of scale: 5(Very satisfactory), 4(satisfactory), 3(neutral), 2(Dissatisfactory), 1(Very dissatisfactory)

Satisfactory with the amount of information you receive from <u>your supervisor</u>	Extent of satisfactory				
--	-------------------------------	--	--	--	--

1. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
2. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
3. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
4. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	1	2	3	4	5

Meaning of scale: 5(Very satisfactory), 4(satisfactory), 3(neutral), 2(Dissatisfactory), 1(Very dissatisfactory)

Satisfactory with the amount of information you receive from your co-worker	Extent of satisfactory				
5. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your co-worker	1	2	3	4	5
6. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through telephone communication with your co-worker	1	2	3	4	5
7. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your co-worker	1	2	3	4	5
8. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your co-worker	1	2	3	4	5

- E. Indicate your overall satisfaction of the communication with your supervisors and co-workers in your organisation

Meaning of scale: 5(Very satisfactory), 4(satisfactory), 3(neutral), 2(Dissatisfactory), 1(Very dissatisfactory)

Overall satisfaction	Extent of satisfactory				
1. Indicate your overall satisfaction of the communication with your supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
2. Indicate your overall satisfaction of the communication with your co-workers	1	2	3	4	5

PART THREE- Organisational commitment in the workplace

Next questions are designed to obtain your perception towards your organisational commitment. Please indicate your level of agree by checking the number that best reflects your perception of yourself.

Read and Answer each of the following questions carefully for accurate evaluation.
Circle the answer that best represents your opinion

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

Organisational commitment	Extent of agreement				
1. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel like part of the family at my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
5. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
7. I owe a great deal to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel obligation to remain with my current employer	1	2	3	4	5
10. This organisation deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5

PART FOUR-Trust issue in the workplace

Next questions are designed to obtain your percept of Trust in your organisation. Please indicate your level of agreement by checking the number that best reflects your perception of yourself.

Read and Answer each of the following questions carefully for accurate evaluation. Circle the answer that best represents your opinion.

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

Trust in the organisation	Extent of agreement				
1. I have positive feelings about the future direction of the company	1	2	3	4	5
2. I honestly express my opinion at the company with the knowledge that employee views are valued	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think that the company offers a supportive environment	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe that the company recognises and rewards employees' skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is generally accepted that the company take care of employee interests	1	2	3	4	5
6. I perform knowing that the company will recognize my work	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think that processes within the company are fair	1	2	3	4	5
8. I act on the basis that the company follows plans with actions	1	2	3	4	5

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

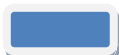
Trust in the co-workers	Extent of agreement				
9. I feel that I can trust my co-workers to do their jobs well	1	2	3	4	5
10. I proceed with the knowledge that my co-workers are considerate of my interests	1	2	3	4	5
11. I believe that my co-workers support me if I have problems	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel confident that my co-workers appreciate my good work	1	2	3	4	5

13. I feel that co-workers are truthful in their dealings with me	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think that my co-workers act reliably from one moment to the next	1	2	3	4	5
15. I will act on the foundation that my co-workers display ethical behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
16. I behave on the basis that my co-workers will not disclose personal information	1	2	3	4	5

Meaning of scale: 5(Strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(Disagree), 1(Strongly disagree)

Trust in immediate supervisors	Extent of agreement				
17. I feel that my manager at the company listen to what I have to say	1	2	3	4	5
18. I act on the basis that my manager display integrity in his/her actions	1	2	3	4	5
19. I think that my manager appreciates and reward when I perform well	1	2	3	4	5
20. I feel comfortable to work with my manager	1	2	3	4	5
21. I believe that my supervisor follows through promises with action	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel that my manager is available when needed	1	2	3	4	5
23. I believe that my manager keeps personal discussion confidential	1	2	3	4	5
24. I feel that my manager trusts his/her employees to work without excessive supervision	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire



If you would like a summary of the final survey report to be sent to you, kindly tick (✓) the box and fill in your name and address below.

Name:

Email:

Survey for Organisational Communication, Trust and Organisational
Commitment (Chinese version)

送发问卷

研究题目：在中国公司中，信任是组织沟通和组织承诺关系中的调节器

研究目的

本次调查是一个正在英国考文垂大学进行的博士研究项目，目的是研究中国企业中信任在组织沟通和组织承诺关系中所起的作用。

名词解释

- 职场信任：在没有任何形式的监督或控制的情况下，一方在信任另一方的前提下，此方愿意承担可能发生在己方的损失。
- 组织沟通：是以组织/工作单位为社会单元，进行的信息反馈，诠释过程。在此过程中立体了社会价值，组织行为，组织角色，工作流程。
- 组织承诺：对公司目标和价值高度的认同，愿意为公司的利益而加倍努力，同时非常愿意继续留在该公司工作。
- 同事的定义：工作的同事。可能在同一个工作小组/部门，或是不同的工作小组或部门
- 领导的定义：直接监督您工作和您直接汇报的对象。

研究说明

- ✚ 以下问题不是一个测试。没有正确或是错误的答案。请选出能够正确表达您的看法的答案。
- ✚ 可能有些问题不是很有关联或是不切题的，但是，请务必答完所有的问题，因为每一个问题都被设计出来回答一个特定的研究题目，没有任何要冒犯答卷者的意思。如果有些问题您暂时不是很确定或者如何回答，请先暂时跳过，继续回答后面的问题。
- ✚ 我保证我将会为有关您的身份和您工作的单位的信息保密。
- ✚ 请将完成的问卷调查，递交到研究员的手里。

第一部分：基本信息

以下问题是询问您的基本信息。请勾出您同意的选项

1. 您的性别？

1) 男 2) 女

2. 您的年龄？

1) 29 岁以下 2) 29 到 39 3) 40 到 49 4) 50 岁以上

3. 您的学历？

1) 中专，高中及以下

2) 大专

3) 本科

4) 硕士及以上

4. 您在公司工作的时间

1) 1 年以下

2) 1 至 3 年

3) 3 年以上到 5 年

4) 5 年以上到 7 年

5) 7 年以上到 10 年

6) 10 年以上

5. 您在公司的职位

1) 普通职员

2) 一般管理人员

3) 中层管理人员

4) 高层管理人员

第二部分：组织内部沟通

以下的问题是询问您对您公司内部沟通状况的看法。请按照您对下列陈述的同意程度选择相应的数字。

A. 请在右边圈出对应您同意程度的数字。

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

您和您 <u>上级领导</u> 的沟通关系	同意程度				
1. 他/她和我经常相互分享对工作和生活的想法，意见，感受	1	2	3	4	5
2. 当我和他/她交谈时我觉得我很轻松和舒服	1	2	3	4	5
3. 工作之余，我和他/她会有与工作无关的社交活动，例如一起吃饭，娱乐	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我认识他/她的家属，并与他们有接触和交流。	1	2	3	4	5
5. 我无条件服从他/她	1	2	3	4	5
6. 即使我不同意他/她的意见，我也会支持他/她的决定	1	2	3	4	5

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

您和您 <u>同事</u> 的沟通关系	同意程度				
7. 同事会帮助我解决工作上的问题	1	2	3	4	5
8. 当我在工作上出问题的时候，同事会好心的提醒我	1	2	3	4	5
9. 同事经常在工作上鼓励我	1	2	3	4	5
10. 我和同事在工作上合作无间	1	2	3	4	5
11. 我和同事在工作上，能够很坦诚地相互交流	1	2	3	4	5
12. 下班后，我们经常一起吃饭，娱乐	1	2	3	4	5
13. 同事会帮我解决我生活中出现的一些问题	1	2	3	4	5

B. 请在右边圈出相应的数字能表示您从以下人群中获取信息的及时性。

数字的意义为：5（非常及时），4（及时），3（中立），2（不及时），1（非常不及时）

对象	及时性				
14. 同事给我提供信息的及时程度	1	2	3	4	5
15. 领导给我提供信息的及时程度	1	2	3	4	5

C. 以下是与个人工作相关的信息，请用数字来代表您对获得信息数量和质量的满意度。

数字的意义为：5（非常满意），4（满意），3（中立），2（不满意），1（非常不满意）

对于领导提供给您沟通信息的数量的满意度	满意程度				
1. 对我工作的评价	1	2	3	4	5
2. 工作职责	1	2	3	4	5
3. 公司的政策	1	2	3	4	5
4. 薪酬和福利	1	2	3	4	5
5. 技术更新对我工作的影响	1	2	3	4	5
6. 公司的错误以及失职	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我的工作表现是如何被评价的	1	2	3	4	5
8. 和我工作有关的问题是如何解决的	1	2	3	4	5
9. 公司决策对我工作的影响	1	2	3	4	5
10. 公司内升职和发展的机会	1	2	3	4	5
11. 公司内重要的新产品，服务或是新的发展计划	1	2	3	4	5
12. 我的工作是如何与公司的总体运行相联系的	1	2	3	4	5
13. 管理层遇到的具体问题	1	2	3	4	5

数字的意义为：5（非常满意），4（满意），3（中立），2（不满意），1（非常不满意）

对于同事提供给您信息数量的满意度	满意程度				
14. 我工作职责	1	2	3	4	5
15. 公司的政策	1	2	3	4	5
16. 薪酬和福利	1	2	3	4	5
17. 技术更新对我工作的影响	1	2	3	4	5
18. 公司的错误以及失职	1	2	3	4	5
19. 我的工作表现是如何被评价的	1	2	3	4	5
20. 和我工作有关的问题是如何解决的	1	2	3	4	5
21. 公司内升职和发展的机会	1	2	3	4	5
22. 公司内重要的新产品，服务或是新的发展计划	1	2	3	4	5
23. 管理层遇到的具体问题	1	2	3	4	5

D. 以下表格中左栏是信息被传递的方式。 以下问题是询问您对从指定方式获取信息数量满意度，请在图表的右边圈出反应您满意度的数字。

数字的意义为：5（非常满意），4（满意），3（中立），2（不满意），1（非常不满意）

对您领导从以下方式提供给您工作信息数量的满意度	满意程度				
1. 从面对面交流的方式获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
2. 从电话交流中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
3. 从书信，便签以及通知方式中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
4. 从电子邮件交流中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5

数字的意义为：5 (非常满意) ， 4 (满意) ， 3 (中立) ， 2 (不满意) ， 1 (非常不满意)

对您同事从以下方式提供给您 <u>的工作信息数量</u> 的满意度	满意程度				
5. 从面对面交流的方式获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
6. 从电话交流中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
7. 从书信，便签以及通知方式中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5
8. 从电子邮件交流中获得的信息量	1	2	3	4	5

E. 以下问题询问您对您目前公司内部沟通的整体满意度。请在图表的右边圈出相应的数字。

数字的意义为：5 (非常满意) ， 4 (满意) ， 3 (中立) ， 2 (不满意) ， 1 (非常不满意)

题目	满意程度				
1. 总的来说，您对您领导沟通状况的满意度	1	2	3	4	5
2. 总的来说，您对您同事沟通状况的满意度	1	2	3	4	5

第三部分-组织承诺

以下问题是询问您对您公司组织承诺的想法。 请按照您对以下陈述的同意程度选择相应的数字。

请仔细阅读以下每一个问题，请圈出最能表示您想法的数字。

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

组织承诺	同意程度				
1. 我对公司有强烈的归属感	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我在公司有“大家庭里一分子”的感觉	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我把公司的事情当作我自己的事情在处理	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我非常乐意今后一直在这家公司工作	1	2	3	4	5
5. 公司对我来说有很深的个人意义	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我对公司有很深的感情	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我对公司有亏欠	1	2	3	4	5
8. 如果我现在离开公司我会感到内疚	1	2	3	4	5
9. 我觉得我有义务留在公司	1	2	3	4	5
10. 我目前的公司值得我对它付出我的忠诚	1	2	3	4	5
11. 由于我对这里的人有责任感，所以我现在不会离开此家公司	1	2	3	4	5
12. 即使离开目前的公司对我来说发展会更好，但我还是会觉得这样做是不对的	1	2	3	4	5

第四部分-职场中的信任问题

以下问题是询问您对您公司信任问题的看法。 请圈出能准确表述您的同意程度的数字。

请仔细阅读以下每一个问题，请圈出最能表示您想法的数字。

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

对公司的信任	同意程度				
1. 我对公司未来发展很有信心	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我诚实地表达我的意见，因为在我们公司，员工的意见是得到尊重的	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我认为公司对员工的工作都很支持。	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我相信公司认可并奖励员工的技术和能力。	1	2	3	4	5
5. 公司会照顾员工的利益，这是有目共睹的/公认的。	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我会因为公司对我业务表现的肯定而努力工作	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我认为公司的工作章程是公平的	1	2	3	4	5
8. 我认为公司会按事先拟定的工作计划工作。	1	2	3	4	5

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

对同事的信任	同意程度				
9. 我觉得我可以相信我的同事们能把他们的工作做得很好	1	2	3	4	5
10. 我相信我的同事会为我的利益着想的。	1	2	3	4	5

11. 我相信我的同事会在我有问题的时候支持我	1	2	3	4	5
12. 我相信我的同事赞赏我好的工作表现	1	2	3	4	5
13. 我觉得和同事打交道的时候他们都很真诚	1	2	3	4	5
14. 我认为我的同事每时每刻都值得信任的。	1	2	3	4	5
15. 我的同事都是会遵守职业道德	1	2	3	4	5
16. 我的同事不会披露任何他人的个人信息	1	2	3	4	5

数字的意义为：5（非常同意），4（同意），3（中立），2（不同意），1（非常不同意）

对领导的信任	同意程度				
17. 我觉得我领导会仔细倾听我说的话	1	2	3	4	5
18. 我领导是一个正直的人	1	2	3	4	5
19. 我认为当我的工作表现很好的时候，领导会表示赞赏，并奖励我	1	2	3	4	5
20. 我觉得和我领导一起工作很轻松舒服	1	2	3	4	5
21. 我相信我领导总是会将承诺兑现	1	2	3	4	5
22. 我觉得我领导总是在需要的时候提供帮助	1	2	3	4	5
23. 我相信我领导会对我们私下的讨论保密	1	2	3	4	5
24. 我觉得我领导认为其员工在没有过多监督的情况下，也同样能完成工作。	1	2	3	4	5

感谢您抽出时间回答本次问卷！！



如果您想要一份本次调查报告的摘要，请在框中打（√）并且留下您的姓名和电子邮件地址。

姓名：

电子邮件地址：

APPENDIX D: QUALITATIVE MATERIALS

Questions in the Interview (English version)

Questions in the Interview (Chinese version)

Interview Questions (with Probing questions)

1. Tell me about your background and work experience.

Probes:

- Your name and age?
- Where are you from?
- What is your highest level of education?
- How long have you worked here?
- What is your management level?

2. What do you think of your supervisor on the job he/she does communicating with you?

Probes:

- What kind of information does your supervisor provide? (e.g., pay and reward)
- How often do they tell you work-related information?
- Are you satisfied with the amount of the information you get from your supervisor?

3. What do you think of your co-worker on the job he/she does communicating with you?

Probes:

- What kind of information does your co-worker provide? (e.g., organisation change)
- How often do they tell you work-related information?
- Are you satisfied with the amount of the information you get from your co-worker?

4. By what kind of method that you can get the work-related information?

Probes:

- Which method of communication is most effective for communicating?
- Which method of communication is your supervisor used most to communicate with you?
- Which method of communication is your co-worker used most to communicate with you?

5. How is your personal communication relationship with your supervisors?

Probes:

- In which way? (e.g. dinner together; share opinions or feelings toward work and life)
6. How is your personal communication relationship with your co-workers?
- Probes:
- In which way? (e.g. dinner together; share opinions or feelings toward work and life)
7. How would you describe the trusting environment in your organization?
- Probes:
- What is your perspective in trust in your supervisors? Which way can impact your trust?
 - What is your perspective in trust in your co-worker? Which way can impact your trust?
 - What is your perspective in trust in your organisation? Which way can impact your trust?
 - Do you think the extent of your trust in supervisor/co-workers will impact on your trust in your organisation and commitment to the organisation?
8. How does your perception of effective supervisory communication impact your perception on trust in your supervisor?
- Probe:
- Trust in organisation?
 - Commitment to your organisation?
 - Do you agree the vertical model in which the four elements were put in a causal equation: Supervisory communication → trust in supervisor → trust in organisation → organisational commitment? If not please explain the reason.
9. How does your perception of effective co-worker communication impact your perception on trusting in your co-worker?
- Probe:
- Trust in organisation?
 - Commitment to your organisation?
 - Do you agree the horizontal model in which the four elements were put in a causal equation: Co-worker communication → trust in co-worker → trust in organisation → organisational commitment? If not please explain the reason.

Questions in the Interview (Chinese version)

采访的问题（加延伸问题）

1. 请告诉我您的一下背景和工作经验

延伸问题：

- 您的名字和年龄
- 您的家乡
- 您的受教育程度
- 您在该公司的工作时间
- 您的职位

2. 请您描述一下您和领导的沟通情况

延伸问题：

- 领导会主动和您谈一些工作方面的事吗？
- 您会主动问领导一些工作方面的事吗？
- 沟通频率是？
- 领导会给您提供什么样的信息？
- 您满意领导给您提供信息的数量吗？

3. 请您描述一下您和同事的沟通情况

延伸问题：

- 同事会主动和您交代一些事吗？
- 您会主动问同事一些事情吗？
- 沟通频率是？
- 您的同事会给您提供什么样的信息？
- 您满意同事给您提供信息的数量吗？

4. 您会通过哪种方式获得信息？

延伸问题：

- 面对面的交谈

- 电子邮件
- 您的领导或是同事会通过电话的方式给您提供一些工作上的信息吗？
- 您曾经有没有通过便签，信件或是通知的方式获取工作信息？
- 您觉得哪一种方式传达工作信息最有效？
- 您的领导经常通过哪一种方式和您进行沟通？
- 您的同事经常通过哪一种方式和您进行沟通？

5. 您与您领导的个人关系如何？

延伸问题：

- 您们会交流一下您们对工作和生活的想法和感觉吗？
- 您们下班后，有没有一些社交活动？（如吃饭）

6. 您与您同事的个人关系如何？

延伸问题：

- 您们会交流一下您们对工作和生活的想法和感觉吗？
- 您们下班后，有没有一些社交活动？（如吃饭）

7. 您会怎么形容您公司里员工之间的信任的问题？

延伸问题：

- 您会给公司的信任环境打几分？
- 请您说明打分的原因。
- 您相信您的领导吗？请打分
- 您相信您的同事吗？请打分
- 您对公司的可信度有多少？
- 您认为员工之间信任的程度会影响员工对组织的承诺吗？

8. 您认为您和领导之间的沟通对公司会有怎样的影响？

延伸问题：

- 会影响员工对公司的信任度吗？
- 您认为它会影响您对公司的组织承诺吗？

- 您同意我的垂直模型吗？不同意的话请做出解释

9. 您认为员工之间的沟通对公司会有怎样的影响？

延伸问题：

- 会影响员工对公司的信任度吗？
- 您认为它会影响您对公司的组织承诺吗？
- 您同意我的平行模型吗？不同意的话请做出解释

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Correlation between sub items of supervisory communication and TIS,
TIO, AC, NC and OCT**

**Correlation between sub items of co-worker communication and TIC, TIO,
AC, NC and OCT**

**Correlation between sub items of supervisory communication and TIS,
TIO, AC, NC and OCT in SOE**

**Correlation between sub items of co-worker communication and TIC, TIO,
AC, NC and OCT in SOE**

**Correlation between sub items of supervisory communication and TIS,
TIO, AC, NC and OCT in JVE**

**Correlation between sub items of co-worker communication and TIC, TIO,
AC, NC and OCT in JVE**

SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION		TIS	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRS	1. My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward work and life	.571**	.538**	.518**	.434**	.507**
	2. I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor	.602**	.552**	.534**	.449**	.524**
	3. After office hours, I have social activities together with my supervisor, such as having dinner together or having entertainment together, which go beyond work duties	.480**	.450**	.425**	.420**	.447**
	overall	.628**	.585**	.561**	.497**	.562**
AIS	4. How well I am doing my job	.595**	.593**	.584**	.475**	.565**
	5. My job duties	.624**	.578**	.577**	.439**	.544**
	6. Organisational policies	.597**	.634**	.578**	.535**	.590**
	7. Pay and benefits	.450**	.510**	.448**	.489**	.494**
	8. How technological changes affect my jobs	.584**	.599**	.572**	.499**	.570**
	9. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.467**	.513**	.450**	.467**	.484**
	10. How I am being judged	.578**	.546**	.519**	.418**	.501**
	11. How my job-related problems are being handled	.631**	.600**	.577**	.486**	.567**
	12. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.567**	.619**	.557**	.533**	.578**
	13. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.511**	.582**	.516**	.559**	.567**
	14. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.552**	.622**	.580**	.593**	.620**
	15. How my job relates to the total operation of my organisation	.585**	.630**	.579**	.569**	.607**
	16. Specific problems faced by management	.542**	.604**	.533**	.556**	.575**
	17. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your supervisor?	.608**	.591**	.525**	.472**	.529**
	overall	.745**	.777**	.717**	.671**	.737**
CCS	18. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.690**	.620**	.612**	.502**	.594**
	19. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.640**	.606**	.601**	.530**	.601**
	20. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.601**	.605**	.582**	.574**	.612**
	21. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.563**	.562**	.536**	.509**	.554**
	overall	.718**	.689**	.671**	.609**	.680**

CO-WORKER COMMUNICATION		TIC	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRC	1. My colleagues helped me solving work related problems.	.588**	.347**	.353**	.212**	.306**
	2. My colleagues kindly reminded me when he/she found the mistakes I made in my work.	.602**	.368**	.360**	.254**	.330**
	3. My colleagues encouraged my work.	.627**	.402**	.398**	.306**	.377**
	4. My colleagues cooperated well with me at work.	.586**	.349**	.353**	.305**	.351**
	5. My colleagues communicated with me frankly at work.	.613**	.360**	.383**	.317**	.373**
	overall	.691**	.585**	.561**	.497**	.562**
AIC	6. My job duties	.627**	.561**	.569**	.441**	.540**
	7. Organisational policies	.572**	.587**	.618**	.493**	.594**
	8. Pay and benefits	.392**	.503**	.448**	.459**	.479**
	9. How technological changes affect my jobs	.508**	.549**	.524**	.488**	.537**
	10. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.468**	.536**	.486**	.475**	.509**
	11. How my job-related problems are being handled	.580**	.557**	.559**	.450**	.539**
	12. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.595**	.600**	.591**	.494**	.579**
	13. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.503**	.575**	.511**	.530**	.550**
	14. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.537**	.601**	.550**	.529**	.572**
	15. Specific problems faced by management	.485**	.557**	.506**	.494**	.530**
	16. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your co-worker	.615**	.459**	.436**	.370**	.429**
	overall	.703**	.728**	.693**	.626**	.701**
CCC	17. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.610**	.478**	.506**	.356**	.463**
	18. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.595**	.510**	.556**	.428**	.527**
	19. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.562**	.512**	.515**	.471**	.524**
	20. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.474**	.463**	.443**	.406**	.451**
	overall	.672**	.590**	.606**	.501**	.590**

SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION (SOE)		TIS	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRS	1. My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward work and life	.520**	.472**	.462**	.354**	.444**
	2. I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor	.530**	.472**	.449**	.355**	.437**
	3. After office hours, I have social activities together with my supervisor, such as having dinner together or having entertainment together, which go beyond work duties	.392**	.372**	.346**	.334**	.365**
	overall	.558**	.510**	.486**	.406**	.483**
AIS	4. How well I am doing my job	.546**	.560**	.528**	.387**	.499**
	5. My job duties	.575**	.542**	.534**	.369**	.494**
	6. Organisational policies	.565**	.618**	.534**	.479**	.547**
	7. Pay and benefits	.393**	.474**	.387**	.444**	.444**
	8. How technological changes affect my jobs	.549**	.560**	.540**	.455**	.539**
	9. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.418**	.480**	.392**	.397**	.424**
	10. How I am being judged	.509**	.488**	.461**	.331**	.432**
	11. How my job-related problems are being handled	.610**	.584**	.565**	.437**	.545**
	12. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.534**	.585**	.518**	.472**	.534**
	13. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.464**	.554**	.454**	.518**	.519**
	14. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.512**	.567**	.518**	.535**	.565**
	15. How my job relates to the total operation of my organisation	.524**	.573**	.518**	.507**	.551**
	16. Specific problems faced by management	.498**	.579**	.481**	.499**	.525**
	17. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your supervisor?	.536**	.510**	.436**	.382**	.442**
	overall	.717**	.762**	.680**	.619**	.701**
CCS	18. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.649**	.579**	.560**	.422**	.535**
	19. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.602**	.556**	.543**	.472**	.549**
	20. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.576**	.563**	.532**	.533**	.572**
	21. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.489**	.509**	.474**	.478**	.511**
	overall	.685**	.654**	.625**	.566**	.642**

CO-WORKER COMMUNICATION (SOE)		TIC	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRC	21. My colleagues helped me solving work related problems.	.525**	.187**	.207**	.048	.146**
	22. My colleagues kindly reminded me when he/she found the mistakes I made in my work.	.547**	.241**	.225**	.112*	.187**
	23. My colleagues encouraged my work.	.559**	.254**	.257**	.132**	.216**
	24. My colleagues cooperated well with me at work.	.486**	.179**	.207**	.146**	.193**
	25. My colleagues communicated with me frankly at work.	.545**	.210**	.250**	.164**	.227**
	overall	.618**	.248**	.266**	.139**	.224**
AIC	26. My job duties	.531**	.451**	.474**	.312**	.431**
	27. Organisational policies	.484**	.533**	.571**	.409**	.535**
	28. Pay and benefits	.254**	.395**	.335**	.370**	.378**
	29. How technological changes affect my jobs	.396**	.465**	.446**	.403**	.458**
	30. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.352**	.451**	.372**	.356**	.392**
	31. How my job-related problems are being handled	.485**	.486**	.516**	.349**	.473**
	32. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.492**	.525**	.549**	.412**	.524**
	33. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.400**	.496**	.424**	.432**	.460**
	34. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.418**	.519**	.470**	.456**	.498**
	35. Specific problems faced by management	.364**	.492**	.422**	.413**	.449**
	36. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your co-worker	.519**	.302**	.284**	.196**	.262**
	overall	.598**	.657**	.622**	.530**	.624**
CCC	37. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.547**	.363**	.425**	.230**	.362**
	38. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.530**	.411**	.476**	.318**	.435**
	39. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.469**	.392**	.413**	.351**	.414**
	40. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.367**	.364**	.346**	.293**	.346**
	overall	.595**	.479**	.518**	.374**	.487**

SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION (JVE)		TIS	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRS	1. My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings toward work and life	.630**	.614**	.593**	.534**	.587**
	2. I feel easy and comfortable when I communicate with my supervisor	.703**	.655**	.660**	.574**	.644**
	3. After office hours, I have social activities together with my supervisor, such as having dinner together or having entertainment together, which go beyond work duties	.607**	.548**	.542**	.542**	.562**
	overall	.728**	.682**	.674**	.620**	.673**
AIS	4. How well I am doing my job	.673**	.638**	.666**	.598**	.658**
	5. My job duties	.702**	.626**	.638**	.536**	.613**
	6. Organisational policies	.636**	.647**	.637**	.610**	.648**
	7. Pay and benefits	.522**	.556**	.551**	.564**	.578**
	8. How technological changes affect my jobs	.617**	.636**	.609**	.548**	.603**
	9. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.516**	.537**	.519**	.552**	.554**
	10. How I am being judged	.688**	.623**	.602**	.540**	.595**
	11. How my job-related problems are being handled	.656**	.617**	.589**	.555**	.595**
	12. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.601**	.655**	.605**	.609**	.630**
	13. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.558**	.609**	.605**	.615**	.633**
	14. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.597**	.694**	.672**	.675**	.698**
	15. How my job relates to the total operation of my organisation	.667**	.702**	.664**	.652**	.683**
	16. Specific problems faced by management	.587**	.620**	.597**	.624**	.632**
	17. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your supervisor?	.710**	.696**	.652**	.590**	.647**
	overall	.779**	.790**	.768**	.738**	.783**
CCS	18. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.744**	.669**	.693**	.610**	.679**
	19. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.682**	.666**	.688**	.608**	.675**
	20. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.615**	.656**	.660**	.632**	.671**
	21. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.671**	.628**	.635**	.549**	.618**
	overall	.765**	.738**	.754**	.676**	.745**

CO-WORKER COMMUNICATION (JVE)		TIC	TIO	AC	NC	OCT
CRC	1. My colleagues helped me solving work related problems.	.679**	.582**	.571**	.447**	.533**
	2. My colleagues kindly reminded me when he/she found the mistakes I made in my work.	.693**	.578**	.582**	.475**	.552**
	3. My colleagues encouraged my work.	.722**	.617**	.606**	.551**	.602**
	4. My colleagues cooperated well with me at work.	.740**	.612**	.585**	.545**	.588**
	5. My colleagues communicated with me frankly at work.	.716**	.592**	.590**	.546**	.591**
	overall	.796**	.668**	.658**	.574**	.643**
AIC	6. My job duties	.756**	.711**	.703**	.613**	.686**
	7. Organisational policies	.695**	.658**	.684**	.608**	.673**
	8. Pay and benefits	.626**	.672**	.638**	.601**	.644**
	9. How technological changes affect my jobs	.668**	.664**	.636**	.603**	.644**
	10. Mistakes and failures of my organisation	.639**	.646**	.655**	.643**	.674**
	11. How my job-related problems are being handled	.715**	.658**	.621**	.591**	.630**
	12. How organisation decisions are made that affect my job	.731**	.693**	.641**	.595**	.643**
	13. Promotion and advancement opportunities in my organisation	.658**	.677**	.636**	.669**	.676**
	14. Important new product, service, or program developments in my organisation	.710**	.712**	.665**	.627**	.672**
	15. Specific problems faced by management	.641**	.629**	.612**	.591**	.625**
	16. What is the level of timeliness with which you get information from your co-worker	.730**	.649**	.627**	.578**	.627**
	overall	.833**	.810**	.782**	.738**	.790**
CCC	17. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through face to face communication with your supervisors	.688**	.621**	.609**	.511**	.585**
	18. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through Telephone communication with your supervisors	.684**	.641**	.668**	.574**	.647**
	19. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through written memos, letters and notices from your supervisors	.685**	.661**	.649**	.623**	.661**
	20. To what extent are you satisfied with the amount of information you get through email from your supervisors	.621**	.583**	.574**	.552**	.585**
	overall	.769**	.720**	.717**	.649**	.711**

